

Israeli campaign aims to settle more in Golan

TEL AVIV (R) — A campaign to settle more Israelis in the Golan Heights will begin on Monday with the sale of state-subsidised homes, an official said on Sunday. Some 380 homes in various stages of construction and spread among 14 Jewish settlements are being offered at prices as low as \$47,000. The official for the regional council, which groups the area's 31 Jewish settlements, said marketing considerations were behind the launch of the campaign now. Yehuda Wollman, head of the local council, told Israel Radio the subsidies were aimed at changing the demographic balance of the region where more than 15,000 Israelis and 18,000 Syrian Druze live. "Of course, we ask from time to time for government aid in order to create a different demographic situation of the Golan Heights," he said.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية «الرأي»

Sheikh Yassin meets with Assad

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Hamas founder Sheikh Ahmad Yassin met with Syrian President Hafez Assad Sunday as he continued a visit here on ways to strengthen ties between Syria and the Palestinians. President Assad's spokesman Gebran Kurieh said the meeting included Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Sharaa and Issam Qadi, head of the pro-Syrian Palestinian organisation Al Saiqa, but gave no details of the talks. The Hamas spiritual leader met Saturday with Syria's Vice President Abdul Halim Khaddam for talks which he told AFP "deepened relations and cooperation with the Syrian people and government." Sheikh Yassin, who has been visiting Syria since Thursday, is due to go next to Lebanon if he obtains authorisation, and then to Jordan, the Hamas representative in Syria, Abu Mohammad Mustafa said Saturday.

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AMMAN MONDAY, MAY 25, 1998, MUHARRAM 29, 1419

Price: Jordan 200 fils

Jordan celebrates 52 years of independence

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan today marks its 52nd anniversary of independence. On May 25, 1946, the Emirate of Transjordan declared its independence when His Majesty King Hussein's grandfather, Abdulah Ben Al Hussein, was proclaimed King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

The founder of the Kingdom, Prince Abdullah, arrived in Ma'an leading a force against the French in Syria, in a campaign part of the Great Arab Revolt launched by Sharif Hussein of Mecca, the great grandfather of King Hussein. Prince Abdullah established the Emirate of Transjordan in April 1921.

Britain officially recognised the Emirate on May 25, 1923 and agreed to Prince Abdullah's request to form the first Jordanian government headed by Rashid Tulei.

On the eve of the anniversary, Jordanians take pride in the achievements of their country which represents a major political and economic accomplishment at the regional level.

Arafat urges U.S. to put Israel on the spot

Mordechai warns peace deadlock will bring about violence as Netanyahu tries to calm storm over peace collapse statement

PALESTINIAN PRESIDENT Yasser Arafat urged Washington on Sunday to make public its plan for Israel's transfer of West Bank land to self-rule and blame the peace blocking progress in peace-making.

Presidency said the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), had urged Washington to set a one-week deadline for Israel to accept the transfer of a further 13 per cent of West Bank land to Palestinian self-rule.

Mr. Arafat denied fixing a one-week deadline. But Mr. Abdul-Rahim said that otherwise, the Palestinians would push for U.N. sanctions against Israel, convene an Arab summit and call for an international peace conference.

for the U.S. to go public with its initiative and publicly blame Israel for rejecting those ideas," Mr. Abdul-Rahim told Reuters.

the Palestinians would lead to bloodshed, Israel army radio reported.

Israel holds military parade in Jerusalem

10 workers wounded by rubber coated metal bullets in Bethlehem

IN THE first military parade in Jerusalem for 25 years, thousands of armed soldiers marched across the city Sunday as part of celebrations marking Israel's 1967 occupation of Arab east Jerusalem.

lining the route, troops from all branches of the military crossed the city, each unit behind a jeep mounted with a machine gun and bearing the unit's symbol on a pennant.

will never give up sovereignty over Arab east Jerusalem or return to its pre-1967 borders.

Mr. Netanyahu's government early this year declared vast portions of the West Bank areas "vital" to Israel's interests which could not be given up even under a final peace settlement with the Palestinians.

Meanwhile, ten Palestinian workers were wounded by Israeli soldiers firing rubber-coated bullets on Sunday in a small demonstration at the entrance to Bethlehem, eyewitnesses said. The unrest erupted



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan walks in the streets of the Wihdat refugee camp, Sunday, to check on the living conditions of people there (Photo by Boghos)

Crown Prince pays surprise visit to Wihdat

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Sunday made an unexpected visit to the Wihdat refugee camp and was accompanied by an enthusiastic welcome by the camp residents who thronged the streets to greet him.

Prince Hassan, who toured parts of the camp, visited one of the homes to drink coffee and listen to their requests and

just solution of the refugees' problem has been found.

Crown Prince reviews competitiveness of mining, pharmaceutical industries

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Sunday took part in reviewing two studies prepared by the Ministry of Planning on the competitiveness of the Jordanian mining and pharmaceutical industries in regional and international markets.

private sectors as well as other sectors concerned with these two studies.

competitiveness against foreign products.

Majali calls for Arab summit to pave way for pan-Arab peace strategy

ABU DHABI (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali said an Arab summit has become necessary to deal with the faltering Middle East peace process and Israel's adamant position.

lished today, the prime minister said a mini-summit grouping Jordan, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and the Palestinians could pave the way for an enlarged summit to help rebuild solidarity among Arab countries and work out a pan-Arab strategy for peace.

maintains good relations with all Arab states and is continuing consultations and coordination at the leadership, government and organisation levels.

Voters turn out in force for Lebanon's landmark municipal poll

BEIRUT (AFP) — Voters turned out in force for Lebanon's first municipal poll in 35 years Sunday amid efforts to seek a political balance between Christian and Muslims and ease tensions which persist despite the end of the civil war.

The polls began in the Mount Lebanon area around Beirut where the army has been deployed to help police maintain security — and many voters were returning to their home villages that were destroyed during the 1975-90 war.

More than 9,000 candidates are vying for some 3,000 municipal council



On the occasion of the INDEPENDENCE DAY Arab Bank is honoured to convey to HIS MAJESTY KING HUSSEIN and to the People of Jordan its most cordial wishes and greetings



(Continued on page 3)

(Continued on page 3)

Saudi foreign minister to make landmark visit to Iran

DUBAI (R) — Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al Faisal marks a new chapter in ties with Iran when he travels to Tehran later this week on an official visit which is expected to culminate in the signing of a cooperation agreement.

Saudi newspapers have said Prince Saud was scheduled to fly to Tehran on May 26 for a two-day visit, invited by his Iranian counterpart Kamal Kharazi, who visited the kingdom in March.

"Saudi-Iranian relations have to a large extent overcome the period of darkness and have entered the era of cooperation," said Wahib Ghorab, a senior Saudi journalist at the London-based Asharq Al Awsat newspaper.

"Prince Saud's visit gains an added significance in light of the possibility of signing a cooperation agreement between the two sides," said Mr. Ghorab.

Saudi media has said Prince Saud was expected to sign a cooperation accord with Iranian officials covering economic, scientific, cultural and other matters. They gave no details.

But former Iranian President Hashemi Akbar Rafsanjani, who now heads a powerful state body, said in March during a visit to Saudi Arabia that arrangements were underway to establish a cooperation commission between the two countries and that the Saudis had drafted a nine-article proposal to study.

Saudi Arabia and Iran have also restored direct air links and Iranian companies exhibited products at a trade fair in Jeddah. An Iranian warship also paid a friendly visit to Saudi Arabia in March, the first one of its kind since the revolution.

But the two countries, the largest oil producers in the 11-member Organisation of

Petroleum Exporting Countries, remain at odds over Western military forces in the Gulf.

Saudi Arabia regards the western presence as necessary for security in the region, which sits on two-thirds of the world's oil reserves. Iran sees security as the responsibility of regional states.

Saudi Arabia also backs the United Arab Emirates in its dispute with Iran over three strategic islands in the Gulf held by Iran.

"Iran has begun a new era and a new course seeking good neighbourly relations and non-interference in the internal affairs of its neighbours," Mr. Ghorab said.

"I believe that the Saudi-Iranian contacts have helped turn a new page in relations between the two countries. The important thing is that confidence has been restored," he said.

Netanyahu to visit China this week

TEL AVIV (R) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will be in China this week on an official visit despite U.S. calls to Israel and the Palestinians to move quickly towards resolving their deadlocked peace talks.

"The main aim will be to strengthen political and economic relations with China," a spokesman for Mr. Netanyahu said about the four-day trip starting on Monday.

The visit is likely to give Mr. Netanyahu a brief respite from weeks of intensive U.S.-brokered diplomacy aimed at forging a deal on further Israeli troop withdrawal in the West Bank in return for stronger Palestinian moves against Islamist groups.

In Washington on Thursday, White House Press Secretary Mike McCurry said it was "very important" that Israel and the Palestinians quickly find a way to move ahead on a peace agenda laid out by the United States.

U.S. Secretary of State

Madeleine Albright has proposed Israeli hand over another 13 per cent of the West Bank to Palestinian self-rule under interim peace deals. Citing security concerns, Israel has offered nine per cent.

At a news briefing in Beijing on Thursday, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhu Bangzao said China was deeply concerned about a long-term deadlock in Middle East peace-making, but he did not elaborate.

Mr. Netanyahu is scheduled to begin his visit by touring an Israeli-Chinese model farm on Monday. He will hold talks in Beijing on Tuesday with Chinese President Jiang Zemin and Prime Minister Zhu Rongji.

On Wednesday, Mr. Netanyahu will tour the Forbidden City and the Great Wall of China and also meet Chinese company directors. He visits Shanghai on Thursday.

The stage for Mr. Netanyahu's China visit was set last August after he made a

brief stopover at Beijing airport on his way to Japan.

Expressing satisfaction over China's assurance that it would not help Iran build a nuclear reactor, Mr. Netanyahu said at the time he would take up an invitation by Chinese Vice Premier Li Lanqing to visit China in 1998.

Mr. Li visited Israel last February with a delegation of key regional officials and economic project decision-makers. Israeli exports to China totalled \$70.5 million last year and imports from China stood at \$206 million, according to Israeli government figures.

But the figures change dramatically when trade with Hong Kong, now under China's control, is taken to account.

Israeli exports to Hong Kong stood at \$878 million in 1997, with diamond shipments to the Asian clearing house making up most of the figure. Imports from the former British colony totalled \$432 million.

Defence witnesses testify about secret Israeli army hit squad

TEL AVIV (AP) — The former commander of a secret army hit squad testified Sunday on behalf of an army major accused of killing a British tourist and wounding the tourist's girlfriend.

Daniel Okef, 45, has confessed to shooting and killing Jeffrey Hunter, 22, and wounding Hunter's girlfriend Charlotte Gibb last August.

Mr. Okef claims, however, that he opened fire on them because he was traumatised by service in the squad, known as "Rimon," Hebrew for grenade, which hunted down

and executed suspected Palestinian activists, according to his lawyer.

On Monday, the court in Beersheba where Okef is being tried heard testimony behind closed doors from General Meir Dagan, former commander of the undercover unit, and from a fellow soldier in the unit, which operated in the Gaza Strip in the early 1970s.

Mr. Okef's lawyer, David Yiftach, said Gen. Dagan testified about the unit's operations. The judge will decide in a few days whether some of

their testimony can be made public. Mr. Yiftach said.

Mr. Yiftach has said that Mr. Okef's experiences in the Rimon unit, where he killed people and saw people killed all the time, "burst out" the night he shot Hunter and Gibb.

If he is convicted of Hunter's murder, Mr. Okef faces a mandatory life sentence.

Mr. Okef's next hearing is scheduled for Sept. 6, when the court will hear testimony from psychiatrists for both the prosecution and the defense.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

15:10 Cartoon — Highlander
15:30 Drama — Raider of the South Pacific
16:00 — Drama — Neighbours
16:30 — Doc. — Last Frontiers
17:00 French Programme — Thalassa
18:00 — Acapulco Bay
19:00 — Le Journal
19:15 — French Programme
19:30 — News headlines
19:35 Comedy — Hope and Gloria
20:00 — Doc. — Perspective
21:10 — Doc. — 99-1
22:00 — News in English
22:30 — Law and Order
23:10 — Bay Watch Nights
23:59 — End of T.X.

PRAYER TIMES

03:57 — Fajr
05:29 — Sunrise
12:32 — Dhuhr
16:13 — Asr
19:08 — Maghreb
21:08 — Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweifeh, Tel. 5920740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 4632785

St. Joseph Church Tel. 4624590

Terra Sancta Church Tel. 4622366

Anglican Church Tel. 4624534/4624811

St. Afrem Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 771751

Amman International Church Tel. 865897

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 5688404

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Tel. 4654932

St. John the Baptist at De la Salle Church Tel. 5661757

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 4637440

Greek Orthodox Church Tel. 4646138

Church of Presentation, Sweifeh Tel. 5920146

The Uniate Catholic Church Tel. 4624757

The English-Language Catholic Parish Tel. 4614190

Evangelical Free Church Tel. 892679

The Baptist Church Tel. 4628052

The Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331

The Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Temperatures are expected to rise, clouds appearing at different altitudes, and winds easterly moderate.

In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Min/Max temp.

Amman 15/30

Aqaba 23/37

Deserts 14/32

Jordan Valley 20/35

Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 28, Aqaba 36 Humidity

readings: Amman 57 per cent,

Aqaba 40 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

AMMAN:

Dr. Khalil Al Tushq 757253

Dr. Nasser Ibrahim 5350432

Dr. Yahya Abdul Rahim 4126072

Dr. Bahjat Bader 5352642

Firas pharmacy 5661912

Al Asema pharmacy 5347632

Naitroukh pharmacy 4623672

AMMAN:

Dr. Khalil Al Tushq 757253

Dr. Nasser Ibrahim 5350432

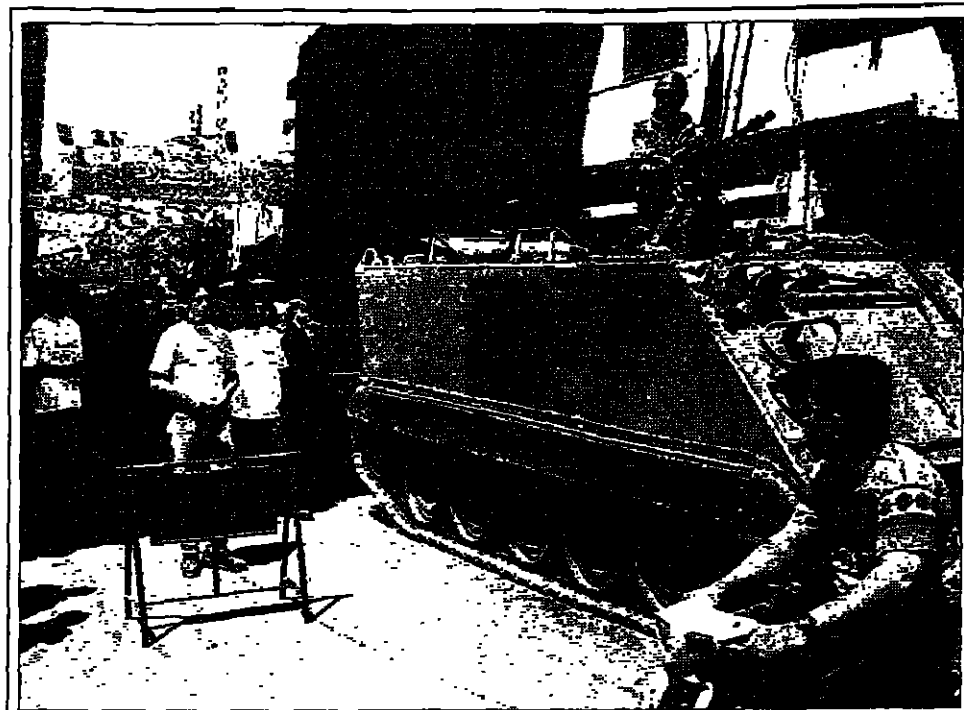
Dr. Yahya Abdul Rahim 4126072

Dr. Bahjat Bader 5352642

Firas pharmacy 5661912

Al Asema pharmacy 5347632

Naitroukh pharmacy 4623672



ELECTIONS IN LEBANON: An armoured vehicle stands by a polling station Sunday in Beirut's Shiite-dominated southern suburbs during Lebanon's first municipal elections in 35 years amid efforts to seek a political balance between Christians and Muslims and ease tensions which persist despite the end of the civil war (AFP photo)

Israeli warplanes attack suspected Hizbollah bases in south Lebanon

NABATIYEH (AP) — Israeli warplanes raided suspected Hizbollah bases in southern Lebanon Sunday following attacks against Israeli soldiers occupying a border zone.

Two Israeli jets fired four missiles at positions believed to belong to the Hizbollah near Aqmat, a village facing the occupied zone, said Lebanese

security officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

There was no immediate word on casualties from the air raid or the preceding Hizbollah attacks.

In Israel, the military command said warplanes attacked "terrorist bases" north of the zone, scoring accurate hits.

Aqmat is in Iqlim Al Tuffah

province, an area Hizbollah uses as a springboard for attacks on Israeli troops. The Israeli air raid in the early afternoon came after Hizbollah announced two attacks against Israeli outposts in the south.

A Hizbollah statement said guerrilla rocket and machine gun fire scored direct hits on the outposts.

Palestinian refugees send appeal to Annan over embassy plans

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Palestinian refugees in Jordan hailing from 'Ain Karen village, near Jerusalem, have urged U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan to intervene and stop Israeli plans to build foreign embassies on confiscated lands belonging to them.

The appeal by representatives of over 30,000 former residents of the Palestinian town was handed over to the United Nations' office in Amman on Saturday.

"'Ain Karen is the property of its indigenous people, who were expelled from the village in 1948 by tyranny and oppression," said the three-page letter, a copy of which was sent to the Jordan Times.

"We, the people of 'Ain Karen, most of whom now live in exile in Amman, declare that we are still holding on to our

land and more than ever want to return to it," it added.

"We warn any country that intends to move its embassy from Tel Aviv to 'Ain Karen that such a move will be considered an illegal act of aggression under international law, and [we] remind them that such an action is a grave mistake."

The statement followed recent Israeli news reports that the Jewish state was planning to allocate parts of confiscated land in 'Ain Karen for the construction of foreign embassies if they are moved from Tel Aviv to occupied Jerusalem.

The reports cited the United States as one of several countries willing to move their missions.

In 1995, the Republican-controlled U.S. Congress passed legislation calling for the United States to move its embassy to Jerusalem by 1999. U.S. President Bill Clinton has vowed to hold off the move until the issue of Jerusalem's future can be

decided in negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians as called for under the Oslo peace accords.

The appeal also coincided with a visit to Jerusalem by U.S. House Speaker Newt Gingrich, a long time supporter of moving the embassy to Jerusalem.

'Ain Karen residents fled their village, southwest of Jerusalem, after the Deir Yassin massacre by Jewish armed gangs which left dozens of Palestinians dead.

Unlike Arab villages during the war, 'Ain Karen was spared. But the Israeli government confiscated their lands and put them under the custody of an "absentees property fund."

The well-known Israeli hospital, Hadassa-Ain Karen, was constructed on a piece of land that belonged to the village, while the houses of Palestinians in the village were rented to Israelis.

Emir receives letter from Sudan's president

KUWAIT (AP) — The Sudanese foreign minister met Kuwait's emir, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmed Al Sabah, on Sunday as part of a Sudanese attempt to mend relations strained since the 1991 Gulf war.

Sudanese Foreign Minister Mustafa Osman Ismail delivered a letter to the emir from Sudanese President Omar Al Bashir, the Kuwaiti News Agency reported. It was the second such

letter in less than a year.

Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait and the Gulf war that followed caused a rift between Kuwait and several Arab countries.

Kuwait believes these countries, including Sudan, tilted toward Iraq. They say they supported Kuwait's sovereignty, but refused to join a U.S.-led coalition that eventually evicted the Iraqi troops because they favoured an Arab solution.

10 rebels killed in Algiers bomb toll rises to 18

ALGIERS (R) — Troops shot dead 10 suspected Islamist guerrillas in Algiers in a four-hour-long gunbattle while 60 more guerrillas were still trapped by soldiers in western Algeria, local newspapers said on Sunday.

Meanwhile, the death toll from a bomb attack at an open-air market in Algiers rose to 18 when two people died of their wounds on Saturday, said the daily La Tribune.

Security forces had said earlier that 16 people died and 61 more were injured by the bomb at the market in Al Harach suburb on Friday.

The blast was the most lethal in a spate of bomb attacks in Algiers since February in which more than 40 people have been killed. Officials blame rebels for the attacks.

The renewed killings in the city have taken their toll on the nerves of many residents.

Dozens of people, most of them university students, were injured in a stampede prompted by a bomb scare inside a commuter train in Algiers on

Saturday, La Tribune said. "Two among the injured had their legs amputated in hospital," it said. Some of the wounded were transported underfoot in the panic, while others jumped through windows of the moving train, the newspaper said.

It was carrying passengers from Bab Ezzouar district, one of Algiers' main universities in the centre of the capital.

The same day troops shot dead 10 rebels in their hideout in Cheraga district in Algiers after a fierce engagement, said another daily, Al Khabar.

Five more rebels were killed on Saturday in Boumerdes region, 40 kilometres east of Algiers, the daily newspaper Sawt Al Ahmar reported.

In the western province of Mascara, 300 kilometres from Algiers, troops had encircled 60 rebels, Al Khabar said.

The newspaper said the siege began a few days ago and advancing troops had found the remains of a civilian whose throat had been cut. It gave no further details.

NEWS IN BRIEF

UAE, Iran fail to announce settlement on disputed islands

ABU DHABI (AP) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Iran ended high-level talks Sunday to resolve a territorial dispute, but failed to announce any settlement and said more talks will be held later. Iran's Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi met with President Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan of the UAE for talks on three islands claimed by both countries, the official Emirates News Agency reported. It said Mr. Kharazi left for Tehran later Sunday.

Turkish forces kill 23 Kurdish rebels

ANKARA (R) — Turkish security forces killed 23 Kurdish rebels in four separate clashes in the southeast of the country over the weekend, the Anatolia news agency said on Sunday. Citing a statement from authorities governing the emergency rule region, it said troops had killed 11 Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) guerrillas in outlying regions of Van, Siirt and Tunceli provinces. On Saturday, the agency reported the deaths of an additional 12 PKK rebels, killed in a three-hour fire fight with security forces in Van province. No military casualties were mentioned.

Iranian exiles in Iraq may intervene in struggle in Tehran

BAGHDAD (AP) — If tension between moderates and hard-liners escalates in Iran, an Iraqi-based opposition group will send its forces across the border, an Iranian exile leader said Sunday. The group, the Mujahadeen-e-Khalq, was part of the opposition that overthrew the U.S.-backed shah in 1979, but the group split with the Islamist government over disagreements about power-sharing. "If the situation escalates, I think there will be no problem for our army to establish its units inside Iran," said Mohammad Mohaddessin, the group's foreign affairs chief. He said he did not think Iraq would oppose such a move.

Moroccan, Egyptian leaders to discuss trade, peace

RABAT (R) — King Hassan of Morocco heads for Egypt this week to discuss issues ranging from trade tariffs to Middle East peace and politics with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. The two will spend two days in Cairo talking and presiding over a joint commission described by one Arab diplomat as "the only one in the Arab World, and probably in the world, led by two heads of state."

Turkish prosecutor indicts Islamist businessman

ANKARA (AP) — A prosecutor has indicted a prominent Turkish businessman with inciting religious hatred and moved to close down an Islamist association he heads, the Anatolia news agency said Sunday. The charges against Erol Yazar, the head of the businessmen's association MUSIAD, stem from a speech he made last year criticising the government's secular policies and calling on members of MUSIAD to "break the heads" of the secular-minded. The indictment said his words threaten public order. It also demanded the closure of MUSIAD. Mr. Yazar could go to prison for three years if convicted.

King receives message from chief justice

AMMAN, J.T. — His Majesty King Hussein received a letter Sunday from Chief Justice of the Court of Cassation and the Higher Judicial Council, who pledged that even efforts would be made to maintain the justice system in Jordan.

Mr. Hakim expressed his appreciation to the King, saying that he has always been keen to develop the justice system, its ability to perform its role and has been in a busy schedule. He praised King Hussein's directives during his meeting last week with the three members of the government in which he said the judiciary will receive all possible support.

He noted the judicial system's absolute commitment to cooperate with the other branches of the government.

Mr. Hakim, a veteran lawyer and former minister, was appointed chief justice of the Court of Cassation and the Higher Judicial Council on May 15 on a pledge to modernise the judiciary.

what's going on

FILMS

The film "Never Again" (1977) and "The Last Days of Pompeii" (1977) will be shown at the Jordanian Film Festival, which is being held at the Jordanian Film Centre, Tel. 630 700 000 and 630 700 001 respectively.

Al-Salam Theatre at the Jordanian Film Centre, Tel. 630 700 000 and 630 700 001 respectively.

EXHIBITIONS

Work by Christian de Pommerehne at the University of Jordan, until June 4.

Paintings by Abdul Karim Al-Hakki at Hamdani Art Gallery, Gharbi St. Tel. 55360981, until May 26.

Photo exhibition "Freda and Garcia Lorca" and "The Last Days of Pompeii" at the Jordanian Film Centre, Tel. 630 700 000 and 630 700 001 respectively.

"Sculpture Designs" by Designer E. Masry and Sculptor Nasser Tabba at the Jordanian Film Centre, Tel. 630 700 000 and 630 700 001 respectively.

Paintings by Lebanese artist Adel Adnan titled "The Last Days of Pompeii" at Darat Al-Fann, Jeddah, until May 26.

Work by Berlin-based Syrian artist Marwan Bashir titled "The Last Days of Pompeii" at the Jordanian Film Centre, Tel. 630 700 000 and 630 700 001 respectively.

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King receives message from chief justice

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein received a cable Sunday from Taher Hikmat, chief of the Court of Cassation and the Higher Judicial Council, who pledged that every effort would be made to maintain the distinguished image of Jordan's judiciary.

Mr. Hikmat expressed his appreciation to the King, saying that he has always been keen to develop the judicial system's ability and enable it to perform its role and mission in achieving justice. He praised King Hussein's directives during his meeting last week with the three branches of the government in which he said the judiciary would receive all possible support.

He voiced the judicial system's absolute commitment to cooperate with the other branches of the government. Mr. Hikmat, a veteran lawyer and former minister, was appointed chief justice of the Court of Cassation and the Higher Judicial Council on May 15 on a pledge to modernise the judiciary.



PRINCESS BASMA ATTENDS GRADUATION CEREMONY: HRH Princess Basma attends a graduation ceremony Sunday for students from the Al Ahlia and Bishop Girls schools in Amman. Princess Basma distributed certificates to the students and presented the two schools' trophies to Bishop Samir Qafeti, head of the Anglican community in Jerusalem and the Middle East (Petra photo).

Cabinet endorses \$5 million loan for hospital equipment

AMMAN (Petra) — The Cabinet on Sunday endorsed a \$5 million loan from the Vienna-based OPEC Fund for International Development to help finance the purchase of equipment for the King Abdullah Educational Hospital at the Jordan University for Science and Technology.

The Cabinet authorised the Jordanian ambassador to Austria to sign the loan agreement on behalf of the government. At a session chaired by

Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, the Cabinet authorised Trade and Supply Minister Mulki, who heads the Kingdom's side to the Joint Jordanian-Algerian Committee, to sign an agreement on bilateral cooperation in sports and youth matters on behalf of the government.

The Cabinet also authorised Dr. Mulki to sign another cooperation agreement with Algeria in the field of awqaf and Islamic affairs.

The Cabinet approved the formation of a delegation from the Jordanian Civil Aviation Authority to attend the meetings of the executive board of the Arab Civil Aviation Organisation (ACAO), which will be held in Cairo from May 27-29. The meeting will discuss the ACAO's budget for the years 1999-2000, its plan of action and Arab states' membership in the council of the International Civil Aviation Organisation.

Crown Prince reviews competitiveness

(Continued from page 1)

qualitative and positive change in the Jordanian citizens' standard of living so that they can contribute positively to the development process.

Prince Hassan called for practical cooperation between the private and public sectors and for translating this partnership into real and practical accomplishments benefiting the Jordanian society.

At the meeting, which was attended by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and a number of ministers, Prince Hassan urged the concerned parties to present a clear vision on the steps to be taken towards achieving national goals.

Prince Hassan who also attended a meeting by the ministry's planning committee

called for reconciling specific policies and the overall policies in economic and social fields. He also called on the concerned parties to pursue studies and dialogue and to take steps to implement resolutions in order to achieve further progress in the Jordanian development process.

Prince Hassan emphasised the importance of continued cooperation and coordination among the various sectors noting that economic development cannot be attained by dependence on one sector alone but rather through integrated action by the various state's sectors.

He urged the concerned parties to make further investment in research and development noting that the studies have

proved that research has been scarce. He also stressed the importance of coordination among the scientific and academic organisations and industries in recruiting and training human resources for the labour market.

Prince Hassan also called on the concerned sectors to benefit from other countries' experiences and expertise with a view to attaining economic development reforms and boosting the national economy.

Later, Prince Hassan met the board of directors of the Jordan Trade Association urging them to work on penetrating new markets for Jordanian products which would be supported by continued improvement in the quality of goods.

Majali calls for Arab summit

(Continued from page 1)

Syrian President Hafez Assad are in constant contact. He added that Jordan keeps Syria and Iraq informed on developments.

The Jordanian government is coordinating closely with the Palestinian National Authority, particularly on matters related to their efforts to carry out the stages of the peace process with Israel, he added.

Progress or success on any Arab-Israeli track without a corresponding solution with the Palestinians can by no means lead to peace and security in the region, the prime minister stated.

The Palestine question is the core issue of the whole Arab-Israeli conflict and

therefore there can be no peace without a solution acceptable to the Palestinian people and their leadership, Dr. Majali said.

Israel, especially under the government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, has lost credibility as the U.S. and Europe have both realised that Arab countries and the Palestinians are genuinely working to achieve peace, unlike the Israeli government, which is seeking to sabotage agreements between Israel and Arab parties, according to the prime minister.

He said the U.S. and Europe are exercising pressure to safeguard the interests of both the Palestinians and the Israelis.

Referring to Iraq, Dr. Majali said the country's

problems could be solved through a direct U.S.-Iraq dialogue aimed at ending the sanctions.

King Hussein has discussed the question of a direct U.S.-Iraq dialogue with American leaders, he said, noting that it was the King who persuaded the U.S. administration to open a direct dialogue with the Palestinians at a time when the Palestine question had been in limbo at the U.N.

Dr. Majali added that the U.S. administration did not reject the idea of dialogue with Iraq and this, he said, is a good sign. He expressed hope that the proposed dialogue between the two sides would begin as soon as possible in order to put an end to the Iraqi people's sufferings.

House denounces Israel's celebrations marking 'unification' of Jerusalem

AMMAN (Petra) — The Lower House of Parliament on Sunday denounced Israel's celebrations marking the anniversary of the "unification" of Jerusalem and called on the world community to help bring about justice and end Israel's continued illegal occupation of Arab lands.

"The Lower House of Parliament is following with extreme concern the Israeli celebrations of the so-called 'unification of Jerusalem', carried out in violation of international laws and resolutions which call on Israel to

end its occupation of the Holy City," the House said in a statement.

"The House reaffirms the historical facts about Jerusalem and refutes all Israeli claims that the Arab city is part of the land of Israel and that Jerusalem will be the united capital of the Jewish state."

"The Lower House reaffirms that all these Israeli claims are null and void and can by no means infringe on the Arab rights in Jerusalem, which should be returned to its Arab owners," the statement added.

Israel's measures against the historic Arab rights in Jerusalem and its disregard for the feelings of hundreds of millions of Muslims around the world constitute flagrant acts of aggression on spiritual and humanitarian values as well as legitimate Arab rights, it said.

"The House, while expressing its condemnation of all the desperate Israeli attempts and practices which coincide with world community's efforts to establish a just peace in the region, calls on world govern-

ments, Arab and Islamic states and the U.N. and the Security Council to shoulder their responsibilities by putting an end to Israel's arrogance, illegal practices and desecration of the holy places," continued the statement.

The statement commended His Majesty King Hussein's efforts in support of the Palestinians' and Arabs' rights in Jerusalem and voiced its absolute support for the Kingdom's leadership in its endeavours to defend Jerusalem and its holy places.

Anani rejects Ben Tsur's blame of Palestinians for peace deadlock

By Alia A. Toukan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan on Sunday rejected an Israeli official's charge that the Palestinians should be more "accommodating" to end the 16-month deadlock in the peace process.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Jawad Anani told the Jordan Times after holding talks with Israel's Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Eitan Ben Tsur, in Amman yesterday, that the Israeli official said that "if the Palestinians were more accommodating, then there would be movement on

the peace process."

Mr. Ben Tsur said that his government wants to see progress in the peace process but rejects the American proposal — which the Palestinians have accepted — for a second Israeli troop redeployment from 13 per cent of the West Bank, said Dr. Anani.

Dr. Anani, however, told Mr. Ben Tsur that "the 13 per cent is the minimum that anyone will accept, and that figure is already a compromise on a compromise," he said, referring to the Palestinian-Israeli Oslo peace accords stipulating that Israel's second troop withdrawal should be around 30 per cent.

Israel has insisted that a withdrawal from more than 9-11 per cent would endanger its security.

According to Dr. Anani there were no discussions on bilateral issues during his talks with Mr. Ben Tsur. "There are more serious things going on right now that need to be concentrated on," he said.

Jordan is enraged by what officials term Israeli "procrastination" in delaying the implementation of agreements with the Palestinians, and in bringing about an "explosive" situation to the region.

His Majesty King Hussein has blamed the deadlock in the peace process entirely on

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his Likud-led government.

Last week, King Hussein said that the statement demonstrated that Mr. Netanyahu has no "respect for the Palestinians and no commitment to the resolutions, and to agreements signed," in addressing members of the legislative, executive and judicial authorities.

The Monarch sent a strong-worded letter of protest to Mr. Netanyahu last month, warning him of the dire consequences for the entire region of not moving ahead with the second redeployment, and holding him responsible for the faltering peace process.

Shipping agents' association elects incumbent president for second term

By Amy Henderson
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Jordan Shipping Agents Association yesterday re-elected Mohammad Kaladeh to head the association's seven-member board for a second two-year term.

Capt. Kaladeh is a major importer of steel, sits on the board of the Aqaba Port Authority and is a former director general of the Aqaba Ports Corporation.

Thirty-three of the association's 56-member general

assembly also reinstated five incumbent board members to guide the association's activities over the next two years. They are: Daifallah Sweidan, Zuhail Khreimo, Tala Halawani, Mashour Al Jazi, and Nadin Gargour. The seventh seat was filled by Tawfiq Kavar after Mr. Kavar and another candidate, Ibrahim Naouri, tied for the position. Mr. Naouri withdrew in favour of Mr. Kavar.

The board has traditionally been controlled by the leading shipping agencies, notably Amin Kavar and Sons, T.

Gargour and Fils and Capt. Kaladeh.

"Shipping industry sources told the Jordan Times that five members of the association, hailing mainly from these enterprises, control between 80 and 90 per cent of the shipping market. However, one source said big business was taken back this year by the election of Gen. Jazi, largely interpreted to be the candidate of the smaller shippers."

A board member told the Jordan Times that Gen. Jazi, who reportedly deals with lines from Libya, Sudan and

Algeria, claimed 25 votes — more than half other members combined — in yesterday's elections. Al Jazi is reported to maintain one per cent of the market.

"I think that smaller shippers possibly felt fed up by the fact that the association and the shipping business are being run by big companies and that they don't necessarily have a voice in the industry," the source said. "The particular concern is to what extent [Gen. Jazi's] vested interest in this industry is if his share of the market is so small."

Jordan celebrates 52 years of independence

(Continued from page 1)

in the same period grew from 10,729 to 13 million and the ministry's budget rose from JD35,248 in 1946 to JD210 million at present.

He noted that one of the main achievements in education is clear through the decline in the rate of illiteracy noting that while in 1961 the rate stood at around 77 per cent, it now stands at 11 per cent.

Amman Chamber of Industry Chairman Khalidoun Abu Hassan said on the eve of the independence anniversary that

Jordan's industry flourished under King Hussein as industrial businesses now number more than 25,000 and contribute to 22 per cent of the gross national product and 90 per cent of the country's exports to 100 nations.

Mr. Abu Hassan said that despite its meagre resources, Jordan has succeeded in setting up 25,000 industrial businesses employing at least 150,000 workers.

Mr. Haider Murad, chairman of the Federation of Jordanian Chambers of Commerce, said in a statement on the occasion

that the economic process has been growing over the years, noting that the members of the Chamber of Commerce in 1923 numbered around 40, rising to nearly 31,000 at present.

Since the 1940s, Jordan's external trade rose in value from JD2.2 million to JD4.2 billion in 1997, Mr. Murad added, noting that the federation which now represents more than 70,000 firms has played a major role in bolstering the national economy.

On the occasion, all government departments and public institutions will be closed,

while several functions have been organised around the country to mark Jordan's 52nd Independence Day anniversary.

On the eve of the anniversary, King Hussein received cables of good wishes from Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, senior government officials, key public figures, heads of unions, religious leaders and prominent Jordanian personalities.

Cables also came from heads of state in Arab and foreign countries.

Arafat urges U.S. to put Israel on the spot

(Continued from page 1)

reach an agreement [on reviving negotiations] there will be bloodshed," Mr. Mordechai was quoted as telling the weekly cabinet meeting.

"We must ensure that the peace process continues while making adjustments required for the security needs of

Israel," he said.

Army radio, meanwhile, said the army and police had been put on alert by the domestic intelligence agency due to warnings about possible Palestinian attacks in the coming days.

Mr. Mordechai, considered the leading moderate in government, has pressed Mr.

Netanyahu to reach an agreement on long-overdue troop withdrawals from the West Bank which has become the key sticking point in attempts to revive negotiations with the Palestinians.

During Sunday's cabinet meeting, Mr. Netanyahu said there had been some progress in the U.S.-mediated negotia-

tions concerning security measures Israel is demanding from the PNA, according to the official minutes of the session.

But he said there was no agreement yet on the security issue or on the scope of the West Bank withdrawal Israel is willing to offer at this stage.

Voters turn out in force for Lebanon's landmark municipal poll

(Continued from page 1)

seats and more than 600 posts of "mukhtar" — officials charged with keeping records of births, marriages and deaths.

Christians constitute the majority in Mount Lebanon, apart from the Shouf and Aley regions which are dominated by members of the Druze community and a smaller Sunni-dominant region further south.

Nearly 700,000 voters over the age of 21 are eligible to participate in the Mount Lebanon phase of the election.

By midday, five hours after polling stations opened at 7:00 a.m., voter turnout had reached 50 per cent in some districts, going up to 70 per cent in others, according to polls surveyed by AFP.

Lebanese Interior Minister Michael Murr said that three hours after voting started, one-in-five voters had turned out.

He said the elections were trouble-free, although security service officials said one

man had been arrested over vote fraud. To vote, families displaced by the civil war are returning briefly to their original homes where they remain listed on civil registers.

In Damur, a Christian seaside town of 16,000 people south of Beirut heavily damaged during the war, a large number of families returned to vote within sight of their still-ruined apartments.

Reconstruction of the town has been on hold since financing was suspended by the refugees ministry for lack of funds, a problem shared by a number of villages further up in the Shouf and Aley mountains.

One candidate list in Damur is calling for speeding up the process of the refugees' return, while another wants "a return with dignity."

Traditionally, municipal elections here are dominated by alliances between families and clans with a strong showing by government-backed candidates.

"The municipal elections still have a

family air about them and everyone feels involved," said one candidate.

Lebanon last held municipal elections in 1963, but polls have been postponed since then because of political crises and the war. It is also the first time Christians have taken part in any poll in at least six years, after they boycotted legislative elections in 1992 and 1996.

Voting in the five other districts in north Lebanon, Beirut, south Lebanon, Nabatiyeh and the eastern Bekaa will take place on May 31, June 7 and June 14.

In a Shiite suburb of south Beirut, where candidates supported by the Hizbollah are facing off against those supported by the pro-Syrian Amal, the Lebanese army has posted tanks on the squares and soldiers are on patrol in the streets, witnesses said.

The pro-Syrian government has been intensifying efforts to prevent the elections from deepening religious rifts, and put forward coalition lists of candidates to ensure Christian representation.

Israel holds military parade in Jerusalem

(Continued from page 1)

after Israeli troops refused to let dozens of workers into neighbouring Jerusalem and on their return home the angry labourers started pelting Israeli soldiers with stones, the witnesses said.

The soldiers responded by opening fire with rubber-coated bullets and wounded 10 of the workers, among them a news agency photographer.

Doctors in Bethlehem said none of the wounded was in a serious condition.

Israeli border guards told the Palestinians they could not enter Israel because of a security alert linked to the "Jerusalem Day" mili-

tary parade.

The army, however, did not announce a formal closure of the West Bank and Gaza Strip during the annual Jerusalem Day commemoration.

Hundreds of extra policemen, soldiers and paramilitary border guards were deployed in Jerusalem to prevent possible Palestinian attacks or other trouble during Jerusalem Day celebrations.

The illegal annexation and declaration of all Jerusalem as Israel's capital have not been recognised by the international community.

Although civilian parades are held annually on the anniversary, the government added dozens of special events for this jubilee year

marking the 50th anniversary of Israel's creation.

Earlier Sunday scuffles broke out when about 50 Jewish militants tried to raise Israeli flags outside Orient House, the unofficial Palestinian headquarters in Arab east Jerusalem.

The building's security guards tore down the flags and pushed back the militants from the Temple Mount Faithful group and fist-fights erupted before police separated the two sides.

The Temple Mount Faithful also set fire to a black coffin on which was inscribed: "The Palestinian Authority = Terrorist State" — a reference to the PNA.

Voter turnout strong in Hong Kong elections despite heavy rain

HONG KONG (AFP) — Hong Kong voters braved torrential rain Sunday to turn out in record numbers for the first election under Chinese rule, defying predictions that bad weather and apathy would lead to a washout.

By early evening the turnout rate had topped the crucial one-million mark, far exceeding numbers in the last poll in 1995, despite widespread criticism of the new electoral system.

By 17:30 p.m. (0930 GMT) 34.25 per cent of voters registered in the geographical constituencies had turned out in the poll, which is also China's first multi-party election since the 1949 Communist takeover.

Hong Kong pro-democracy groups called the election a big step forward for democracy on the mainland, despite claims the voting arrangements here were designed specifically to keep them out of the legislature.

"This is a very significant day for the people of Hong Kong because this is the first time in the history of the People's Republic of China that some people have been given the right to vote," Democratic Party Chairman Martin Lee said after casting his ballot.

"If we in Hong Kong do not exercise this right how

can we face our conscience and the 1.2 billion people in China?"

Pre-poll surveys have predicted the Democratic Party will capture about 50 per cent of the popular vote. But under the new electoral system that level of support will only translate into about a quarter of the 60 Legislative Council seats at best.

In the three-tier election, 10 seats will be chosen by an Election Committee, 30 "functional constituency" seats are returned by professional groups and 20 seats are elected by universal suffrage.

But under new arrangements introduced after China scrapped the pre-handover legislature, only some 140,000 people can vote in the "functional" constituencies, compared to some two million in 1995.

Mr. Lee predicted people would turn out despite the bad weather if they realised the historical importance. Local village leaders in China have been directly elected for the past 10 years but there is no direct election at national level and no multi-party system.

Despite early indications that turnout would exceed expectations, Hong Kong leaders kept up their intensive campaign Sunday to urge the public to vote.

"We should not be complacent," Chief Secretary for Administration Anson Chan said. "I urge every registered voter to exercise their right so we can have a truly representative legislature."

Chief Executive Tung Chee Hwa, who was confronted by a small but vocal pro-democracy protest when he arrived to vote, had the same message.

"I appeal to every one in Hong Kong to come and vote despite the bad weather," he said.

Mr. Tung said voting was a very important step in the realisation of Hong Kong's post-handover constitution and the "one country, two systems" formula under which it returned to China last July with a guarantee of a "high degree of autonomy."

Voters said the sense of history, coupled with concern over Hong Kong's worst economic downturn in decades had lured them through flooded streets to the ballot box.

"I'm not just exercising my rights," said one housewife dragging along a son admiring a government-issued souvenir card for the first election under Chinese rule.

"I want to see that those who really care about our jobs are elected to the Legislative Council," she

added. "I want candidates to make certain our government is heading in the right direction to revive the economy," said watchman Tang Kwong-Fok.

Academics have repeatedly said turnout would be the key issue in the election and anything less than 1.0 million voters would be a sign of no confidence in the electoral arrangements.

There had been widespread criticism the system was too complicated and fears the public would not bother to vote for what many see as a rubber-stamp parliament.

Professor Lau Siu Kai, head of the Asia Pacific Research Centre at the Chinese University, said pre-poll surveys may have overlooked a vital point.

"The other thing we may have underestimated is the increase in the sense of civic responsibility; now Hong Kong people are governing Hong Kong," he said.

Mr. Lau said the turnout rate was still low in international terms, "but if we get a level of 40 per cent, the Hong Kong government can feel very pleased."

"The democrats can also say it shows Hong Kong has matured and use it as an excuse to step up their campaign for more democracy," he added.



Hong Kong Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa (left) cast his vote as Secretary for Constitutional Affairs Michael Suen looks on during Hong Kong's first election under Chinese rule (AFP photo)

Taliban urge Pakistan to refrain from nuclear tests

KABUL (AFP) — Afghanistan's Taliban militia Sunday backed Pakistan's moral right to conduct nuclear tests but joined a chorus of pleas to their neighbour to show restraint.

"As a peace-loving country Afghanistan considers the nuclear tests by India as a threat to regional security which will result in a nuclear arms race," an official statement from the purist Islamic militia said.

"Pakistan has the right to conduct their own nuclear tests because of their security and defence but it should exercise restraint so that such races are not expanded," it added.

The current Kabul regime enjoys close ties with Pakistan, which is one of only three countries that recognise the

hardline movement. The militia accuse India of providing financial support to their northern rivals.

The Taliban hold two-thirds of Afghanistan including the entire southern part of the country which borders with Pakistan's Baluchistan province, which analysts consider to be the most likely venue for a nuclear test.

Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif Friday indicated his government had not yet taken a decision on a response to the May 11 and 13 Indian tests, saying "whatever decision is eventually taken will be in the supreme national interest."

Islamabad has been under pressure from Western countries and Japan not to test.

Nearly 500 Afghans punished for trimming beards

KABUL (AFP) — Nearly 500 Afghan men have been punished with lashings under strict Islamic laws after being found to have trimmed their beards by Taliban police, residents and official sources said Sunday.

State-run radio Shariat announced that 490 men had been given lashings after they were found with neatly groomed beards, while 110 women were also punished after the Islamic militia's police patrols found them to be inadequately covered.

"The unit also punished 10 taxi drivers who, contrary to Islamic teachings, transported women without their legal male relative," the Taliban radio added.

Kabul residents said that those captured by the patrols — which speed around the city in Japanese-made jeeps mounted with loudspeakers blasting out religious sermons — received a brief lashing with a rubber hose.

Last week the patrols punished 120 beard trimmers, while the week before 65 men were

given a forced haircut by scissors-wielding religious police unhappy with lengthy fringes considered un-Islamic by the militia.

Since seizing the once-liberal Afghan capital in September 1996, the Taliban's Department for the Fostering of Virtue and Prevention of Vice has strictly enforced the Muslim militia's strict rules of appearance and conduct.

In 1997, the militia nabbed more than 1,200 beard law violators and the current onslaught of arrests comes amid steadily declining facial hair levels brought about by the false belief that last year's massive crackdowns had eased.

Women are required to wear the all-covering tent-like burqa garment, through which the wearer can catch a glimpse of the outside world through a small hexagonal mesh over the eyes.

The Taliban control two-thirds of Afghanistan and have imposed what they say is the world's purest Islamic state.

1 dead, scores injured as Kenya peace rally ends in chaos

NAIROBI (AFP) — One of 30 armed raiders who invaded a rally in the Rift Valley's Trans Nzoia district, firing guns and shooting arrows, was killed when the crowd turned on the gunmen, Kenyan newspapers reported Sunday.

Scores of people were injured, four seriously, in a stampede triggered by an explosion believed to have been caused by a grenade thrown into the crowd by raiders emerging from surrounding bushes maize plantations.

Some 30 ruling party and opposition MPs, led by parliamentary opposition leader Mwai Kibaki, had attended the rally Saturday at Sabwani Primary School on peace for the troubled North Rift region.

The rally was organised as a direct response to a first meeting at the same venue three weeks ago, which also ended in chaos when police moved in and beat up 10 MPs and journalists.

The raiders struck as Limuru MP George Nyanja was addressing the crowd. After the explosion, an arrow landed on the VIP tent, forcing the crowd estimated at 5,000 to scatter and the MPs to run for cover.

The raiders then took off, with residents in hot pursuit. One was cornered, killed and mutilated in the presence of reporters and MPs, the reports said.

Uniformed policemen stationed about 50 metres away did not respond to the commotion, but took away the body of the raider after the crowd left the area, the newspapers said.

Addressing a joint conference later, opposition leader Mr. Kibaki said that three Land Rover police officers in civilian clothes who later disappeared were "missing."

Mr. Kibaki said police, with the help of people believed to be warriors, had stationed themselves five kilometres from the meeting, warning the meeting's vendors that the rally should not take place.

The opposition leader said he had personally witnessed the police standing behind a crowd of men armed with arrows moments before the explosion.

The two rallies had been called by the local MP and top opposition leader Ford George Kapten, to discuss insecurity, cattle raids and land allocation following a nationwide outcry over serious security problems in the North Valley region.

Fighting between the Pokot and Marakwet tribes, which started out as traditional rivalry and cattle rustling, has degenerated into a daily bloodbath, leaving scores dead in the past two months, and forcing several hundred families, mostly Marakwets, to flee their homes.

Nationwide food supplies have been threatened because the theatre of the fighting is a principal Kenyan bread basket.

President Daniel Arap Moi has ordered the army to move in to help the police disarm people in the region possessing illegal firearms.

Cannes prizes to Angelopoulos, Bergman

CANNES, France (AFP) — The Ecumenical Prize of the Cannes Film Festival was awarded Sunday to Greek filmmaker Theo Angelopoulos for his film "Eternity and a Day" which closed the festival competition.

The jury praised the film's "poetic writing" which "reveals the depth of life ... and opens itself to a rich symbolism."

The director "invites us to see and understand the suffering of humanity," the jury said, hoping that audiences would "be moved by the unexpected confrontations, tender sharing and the struggle with uncompromising truth."

The film, starring Bruno Ganz, relates the encounter of a dying writer with an

Albanian child refugee and is a rich meditation on age and infancy, myth and memory, creativity and social life, time and eternity.

The Ecumenical Jury also honoured Swedish director Ingmar Bergman, whose latest television play "In the Presence of a Clown" was screened in the festival's "Certain Regard" section, "for his life's work which reveals the mysteries of the human heart throughout history."

The Ecumenical award, initiated in 1974 by Catholic and Protestant film organisations, has in the past crowned works by such filmmakers as Andrei Tarkovsky, for "Nostalgia", and Wim Wenders for "Paris, Texas".

Chinese officials sacked for playing poker on the job

BEIJING (AFP) — Three local government officials in China's eastern Shandong province have been sacked for playing poker during working hours, the Communist Party's flagship newspaper's Daily reported Sunday.

The newspaper said the Laizhou city government had punished another 22 public officials for gambling at cards since it established a "self-discipline" system in March.

The system aims to eliminate gambling, drinking, "rough working styles" and drunk driving during duty hours, it said. Nine in 10 of the cases were brought to light by private citizens through the use of complaint hotlines, it said.

Northern Shanxi province, meanwhile, has sacked 2,000 policemen

since the start of a campaign to upgrade law-enforcement personnel began in March, the newspaper said in a separate report.

Most of those sacked — all but 40 of whom were only "temporary" officers — were found unqualified for duty.

Around 100 others were dismissed for specific violations. The report cited Wei Shuwei, a Taiyuan city criminal squad director, who was removed from his post for eating at restaurants without paying and "beating up local people."

President Jiang Zemin and other top leaders have been promoting simple living and honest work to quell public resentment over corruption and abuse of privilege by public officials.

Anti-Asia MP's party could destabilise Australian state

SYDNEY (AFP) — The Australian government warned Sunday that anti-Asia MP Pauline Hanson's One Nation party could destabilise Queensland state's government if it seized the balance of power there.

Ms. Hanson's home state goes to the polls next month in what will be the fledgling One Nation party's first electoral test.

"Clearly in Queensland, One Nation as it is ironically described, has more support than in other parts of Australia," Foreign Affairs Minister Alexander Downer said in a television interview.

"If One Nation wins

seats in Queensland I think that will be a force for instability in Queensland politics," he said.

Queensland Premier Rob Borbidge has hinted that the state may have to go to the polls for a second time if next month's election results in a hung parliament, with One Nation holding the balance of power.

He dismissed questions Sunday about whether he would rule with the support of One Nation candidates if they snared the balance of power.

"There's no question of any deals ... One Nation have said they will not support the coalition and they will not support

Labour," he said.

Mr. Borbidge also sent a stern warning to members of a secret paramilitary organisation reportedly operating in Queensland, that they must obey and respect the law.

Newspaper reports Sunday claimed that an armed group called the Freedom Scouts, which has declared strong support for One Nation, aims to establish a force of 160,000 to be divided into small guerrilla units.

Its members were convinced Australia was unable to defend itself and were arming themselves against invasion from the north. The Brisbane Sunday Mail

reported.

The group was believed to have tried to take over the a branch of One Nation in far-northern Mackay, which was recently disbanded as a result.

Ms. Hanson shot to prominence in the March 1996 general elections where she was elected as an independent after being dumped by the Liberal Party — the senior partner in the coalition that rules federally and in Queensland.

Her policy bandwagon of zero-net immigration, welfare cuts for Aboriginal Australians and looser gun laws sparked intense debate here last year.

Reformer-led coalition heads polls in upcoming Montenegro vote

BELGRADE (AFP) — A coalition led by Montenegro's reformist President Milo Djukanovic is leading opinion polls one week before early legislative elections, the Belgrade Fonet news agency reported Sunday.

Mr. Djukanovic's coalition "To live better" received the support of 42 per cent of those surveyed, compared to 30 per cent for the Socialist People's party of his main rival, Momir Bulatovic.

A third party, the Liberal Alliance of Slavko Perovic, polled 10 per cent in the opinion poll carried out by a Montenegrin polling agency.

Mr. Bulatovic was president of Montenegro before being ousted by Mr. Djukanovic, the then prime minister, last year.

Mr. Djukanovic, the tiny republic which together with Serbia makes up Yugoslavia, has charted a different course to that of hardline Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic, who backed

Mr. Bulatovic.

That policy appears to be paying off. Of the 1,840 people questioned in the poll, Mr. Djukanovic is the most popular politician in Montenegro. He won the backing of some 58 per cent of those polled. Mr. Bulatovic came seventh, behind four of Mr. Djukanovic's aides and Mr. Perovic.

The May 31 parliamentary elections are set to be a major battle between these two factions, especially since Mr. Bulatovic became Yugoslav prime minister last week in a staged federal parliament move.

Mr. Djukanovic blames Mr. Milosevic for the remaining political and financial sanctions against Yugoslavia, accusing Yugoslav strongman of acting as an autocrat, isolating the federation and leading the country to disaster.

More than 61 per cent of those asked considered "justified" Mr. Djukanovic's criticism of Mr. Milosevic's rule of the joint state.

U.S. not worried over Estrada's nationalistic postures

MANILA (AFP) — The United States is not worried over would-be Philippine President Joseph Estrada's anti-American stance in the past, Washington's ambassador to Manila said Sunday.

"He has long been a friend of the United States and he made very clear to me in our meeting last week that he wanted very close relations between the Philippines and the United States," Ambassador Thomas Hubbard said.

Mr. Hubbard was speaking on the sidelines of a meeting between a U.S. delegation and senior foreign ministry officials of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) which ended here Sunday.

Despite Mr. Estrada's "nationalistic posture over some issues" Mr. Hubbard said Washington was looking forward "to working with him across the board."

Then a senator in 1991, Mr. Estrada had been among those who voted for the expulsion of U.S.

forces from the country. He even starred in an anti-U.S. bases movie to stir support.

The Senate vote led to the closure of U.S. military bases and a cooling of relations between the once-close allies.

Mr. Hubbard said he was also hopeful Mr. Estrada will see the quick passage in Congress of a proposed Visiting Forces Agreement with the Philippines that would provide legal immunity to visiting American troops.

"He said very clearly as part of his platform that he supports the Visiting Forces Agreement ... and I certainly expect him to move forward in that agreement," Mr. Hubbard added.

Mr. Estrada, a former movie actor, has an overwhelming lead in an unofficial count of votes from the May 11 presidential election.

An official count to start Tuesday is expected to confirm his victory. He will succeed incumbent President Fidel Ramos who steps down June 30 at the end of a six-year term.

Money se U.S. drug only tip of

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The amount of money stashed in Operation Casablanca, the large U.S. criminal investigation into drug money laundering, is nothing compared to the profits made in drug sales in the United States, experts here said.

U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno and U.S. Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin announced the seizure of more than 100 per cent of the massive drug code-named Operation Casablanca Monday.

The officials said they had broken an international money laundering operation that involved Mexican banks and Latin America's most powerful drug cartels.

The sting was described as "the culmination of the largest, most comprehensive drug money laundering case in the history of U.S. law enforcement."

The U.S. officials said they could seize up to \$2.5 billion from U.S. and Mexican accounts, and arrest as many as 200 people.

However the seizure is a mere 0.25 per cent of the \$50 billion the illegal drug trade generates each year in the United States, according to estimates from the White House.

The immediate seizure of Casablanca is seen as looking at the "tip of the iceberg" of drug transactions.

Francisco Thoum, based Colombian money laundering.

A large percentage of about one-third of drug profits are sent to nations outside the United States through a network of small banks that send the

Suspected 'gran hangs himself af

SYDNEY (AFP) — A "hoor" who was suspected of murdering a woman, hanged himself after the last two hours of his trial.

Court officers Douglas Pitt hanging the body of the man, who was hanged shortly after his trial in court Sunday.

The services were suspended after a 10-minute break in the trial, which had been held in private.

"I would describe the man as a very intelligent and charming man in my police work," said a police officer.

New Zealand children o

AUCKLAND (AFP) — New Zealand government leaders compensation for children of Vietnam war veterans.

Prime Minister Jim Bolger said Sunday that the government would pay compensation to the children of New Zealand war veterans.

Mr. Bolger said the government would pay compensation to the children of New Zealand war veterans who had been treated for mental health problems after the war.

Money seized in U.S. drug sting only tip of iceberg

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The amount of money snared in Operation Casablanca, the largest U.S. criminal investigation into drug money laundering, is nothing compared to the profits made in drug sales in the United States, experts here said.

U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno and U.S. Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin announced the arrest of more than 100 people and the seizure of \$35 million in the massive sting code-named Operation Casablanca Monday.

The officials said they had broken an international money laundering operation that involved top Mexican banks and Latin America's most powerful drug cartels.

The sting was described as "the culmination of the largest, most comprehensive drug money laundering case in the history of U.S. law enforcement."

The U.S. officials said they could seize up to \$122 million from U.S. and Mexican accounts, and arrest as many as 200 people.

However the seizure figure is a mere 0.25 per cent of the \$50 billion the illegal drug trade generates each year in the United States, according to figures from the White House's own drug czar, retired General Barry McCaffrey.

The immediate effect of Casablanca is really to pressure banks into closely looking at the origin and destination of large money transactions, said Francisco Thouni, a U.S.-based Colombian expert on money laundering.

A large percentage — Mr. Thouni estimates about one-third — of the drug profits are laundered in nations outside of the United States through a network of small companies that send the money

out using wire transfers, couriers, and the regular postal system.

Money shipment locations are springing up like mushrooms across the country, in large part to satisfy the demand of foreign migrants — many from Latin America — who want to send money back home to relatives.

In an attempt to crack down on the trade, in August 1996 the U.S. Treasury Department ordered 12 New York firms and 1,600 franchisees to report the names and addresses of the senders and the recipients of all money transfers to Colombia worth \$750 or more.

The Treasury Department said that the crackdown led to a noticeable drop in money transfers from New York to Colombia.

However money transfer operations have since popped up in dozens of states outside New York. "What we are seeing now is money being laundered through cities not covered by the reporting restrictions," Mr. Thouni said.

Treasury officials would like to have companies report all foreign transfers of \$750 or more, including "suspicious" transfers of less than \$500.

The government's request was dropped, at least temporarily, when the largest money-transfer companies in the business — the U.S.-based Western Union and MoneyGram — complained that they would have to show the government some 800,000 forms each year, at an annual cost of \$10 million.

In any case, treasury officials are already overwhelmed looking into the 4,000 to 5,000 transfers reported each year of more than \$10,000 or more, Mr. Thouni said.

Suspected 'granny basher' hangs himself after arrest

SYDNEY (AFP) — A "granny basher" who terrorised Sydney's elderly with more than a dozen savage attacks over the last two months was found hanging in his cell Sunday hours after his arrest, police said.

Court officers found Douglas Pitt hanging from a shoelace tied to a window grille shortly after his appearance in court Sunday, but were unable to revive him, a corrective services spokesman said.

Pitt, 27, had been charged with breaking and entering and two counts of grievous bodily harm after a vicious attack on an 84-year-old woman in her home Saturday.

"I would describe her injuries as amongst the most serious and shocking I have seen in my police service," police Assistant Commissioner Ken Maroney told journalists

after the arrest.

The woman was being treated for severe facial injuries and was in serious but stable condition.

Pitt was caught after the woman's neighbour, alerted by banging noises, allegedly caught him in the act and was able to identify him.

The court heard the attack was closely related to 12 other incidents where elderly women in the same inner-city area were robbed and beaten in their homes for relatively small sums of money. Police prosecutor Sergeant Wayne Drury told the court that Pitt was believed to be involved in a "series of bashing" of elderly women, and said his previous record of criminal charges was "horrific".

The court also heard that Pitt was receiving methadone treatment.



Jailed East Timorese leader Xanana Gusmao speaks to journalists during a rare interview at Jakarta's Cipinang jail (AFP photo)

Jailed East Timorese rebel leader says struggle will continue

JAKARTA (AFP) — Jailed East Timorese rebel leader Xanana Gusmao said here Sunday the East Timorese struggle for independence from Indonesia would continue after the fall of long-time ruler Suharto.

"What we are fighting for will continue," Mr. Gusmao, 51, told journalists here in a rare interview in Jakarta's Cipinang jail where he is serving a 20-year sentence for separatism.

"The new government will have to respect our right to choose (independence)," said Mr. Gusmao, the leader of the armed wing of the Timorese independence movement, who was captured in 1992.

Sporting a red cap in the courtyard of the jail, where he has been held since 1993 along with other political prisoners, Mr. Gusmao said he had been "generally" well treated and his conditions in prison were "pretty good."

"I am a little older and a little greyer," the bearded rebel leader said, speaking in English, and joking and laughing with reporters.

Holding out slim hopes of being released any time soon under an expected amnesty by the new government of Mr. Suharto's protégé President B. J. Habibie, Mr. Gusmao said however he was confident the international community "will not forget my case."

He was jailed for life in May 1994 for plotting against the state and illegal possession of firearms. Mr. Suharto later commuted the sentence to a 20-year jail term. While in prison, Mr. Gusmao has taken up bonsai and painting as a hobby. He cares for pet fish and plays a lot of football,

and has undergone treatment for kidney stones.

"Generally I don't expect to be released soon unless the new government (changes direction). I don't accept 'amnesty' because it means forgiveness, so I don't accept that," he said.

"It was extraordinary for all of us political prisoners that Suharto stepped down," he said, while remaining pessimistic on progress over East Timor.

"I don't expect so much from the new government. I believe that the international pressure will continue to make sure that the problem of East Timor is not the internal problem of Indonesia... (but) an international problem," he said.

Indonesian troops invaded East Timor in 1975 and annexed the former Portuguese colony as a province in 1976.

The United Nations and most states do not recognise the unilateral annexation, and still view Lisbon as the official administrator over East Timor, where Indonesian troops have been accused of widespread human rights abuses.

Mr. Gusmao said he had been allowed to meet his family and friends when they came to Jakarta, but had "never" met with Indonesian officials.

But he said he had met with visiting U.S. officials, South African President Nelson Mandela, and three times with U.N. special envoy for East Timor Jamsheed Marker.

Mr. Gusmao was head of the Fretilin armed independence movement from 1979 until his arrest in the East Timorese capital of Dili in 1992.

Battle starts for votes of Protestants in assembly elections

BELFAST (AFP) — Only a day after the historic vote in favour of the Northern Ireland peace deal, a fresh battle began Sunday for the hearts and minds of Protestants in next month's elections to the new Belfast assembly.

Britain's Northern Ireland Secretary Mo Mowlam urged the people of Northern Ireland to vote for parties committed to the "spirit" of the peace deal in the forthcoming June 25 elections.

"We had a vote for peace, we had a vote for non-violence, and if people are going to mirror that, they have to vote for people that will implement the spirit of that agreement and I hope that's the case in five weeks' time," she said from Belfast in an interview for Britain's GMTV television.

The votes north and south of the border in favour of the peace plan — 71.12 per cent in Northern Ireland and 94.39 per cent in the Irish Republic — have cleared the way for the creation of the new 108-member body, which will be an essential part of the province's future government.

Under the agreement, Northern Ireland is to become semi-autonomous, remaining part of Britain but allowing Dublin a formal say in its future for the first time.

The main focus of attention in the assembly election campaign is certain to be on the battle for the Protestant unionist vote

after the bitter contest between the 'yes' and 'no' campaigners in the referendum contest.

The 'no' campaigners, headed by the fiery Reverend Ian Paisley of the Democratic Unionists (DUP), know that if they can take more than half the unionist seats in the parliament they can effectively make it unworkable.

The 71 per cent vote in favour indicated that a slim majority of the Protestant unionist community backed the agreement, as exit polls indicated near-unanimous support among the Catholic nationalist minority.

In the centre of Belfast Sunday morning, passers-by were hopeful about the

chance for peace after nearly 30 years of sectarian conflict which has claimed over 3,200 lives.

Ian, 26, a Protestant walking arm-in-arm with his Catholic girlfriend, Sinead, 23, said: "We're just going to have start working with each other, and recognising that each has their own part to play."

"Where I was growing up, I grew up amongst it all, it was forced upon me to hate Catholics, but I saw through all that, there's good and bad on each side."

"It was definitely a good symbol," he said of the moderate Protestant unionist leader David Trimble's joint appearance at a rock concert with the head of the large moderate Catholic

nationalist SDLP, John Hume.

The two men will have a close relationship in the new semi-autonomous government, as Mr. Trimble is expected to be the first minister as the leader of Northern Ireland's largest party, and Mr. Hume his deputy.

His girlfriend was more cautious, but still believes that the legacy of centuries of sectarian division can be overcome.

"It'll be a long time before the hatred between the two communities disappears, this place is so divided. But I believe it will happen. A lot of the younger ones are more sensible," she said.

Walter, 28, a Protestant news vendor, said: "I just want peace and that's it, people to be left alone to get on with their lives."

But in East Belfast, a fiercely unionist area which is a bedrock of support for Rev. Paisley, people vowed to keep up their opposition to the deal.

"It's a waste of time talking about peace. It's nonsense," said John Martin, 75.

"Trimble betrayed us. A bomb killed nine people in the Shankill Road, and Gerry Adams (leader of Sinn Féin, political wing of the IRA) carried the coffin of the bomber, and that's the man Trimble's been consorting with."

A middle-aged man added: "I'd like to see peace, but not at any cost."

No injuries reported as bomb explodes in Belfast

BELFAST (AFP) — A small device exploded, but caused no injuries, in a Belfast train station late Saturday night as it was being examined by an army bomb squad alerted by residents, police said Sunday.

The device, described as a homemade bomb, went off hours after voters in Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic decisively approved an historic peace plan for the troubled British province.

Police said they were questioning two persons Sunday morning in connection with the blast.

Saturday, shortly after the results of the peace referendum were announced, Irish police intercepted two automobiles near the border with the north, packed with a half-tonne of home made explosives, and arrested two persons.

Police have warned that three dissident factions — the Irish Republican Army, and one Protestant paramilitary group, remain staunchly opposed to the Northern Ireland peace process.

Daniel Ortega reelected head of Sandinista Front

MANAGUA (AFP) — Former Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega was reelected head of the Sandinista party late Saturday, vowing to maintain a hard-left line within the country's main opposition party.

Mr. Ortega lead the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) in a successful guerrilla uprising against dictator Anastasio Somoza in 1979. He then became Nicaragua's president, and remained leader until losing elections in 1990 to right-wing politician Violeta Chamorro.

Mr. Ortega, 54, was reelected to the job despite charges that he sexually abused step daughter Zoila Maria Narvaez for 11 years.

Mr. Ortega ran unopposed for the job despite some discontent over his leadership, and was reappointed by an overwhelming majority in a secret party poll.

Former Interior Minister Tomas Borge was elected party undersecretary.

Mr. Ortega and Mr. Borge, both hard liners, are the only original Sandinista leaders remaining in top party posts.

"In my case, nothing has been won or lost," Mr. Ortega said upon hearing the election result.

The deal was thrashed out on Good Friday by Protestant and Roman Catholic backed parties in Northern Ireland together with government ministers.

"After many false dawns, this stunning vote is a historic turning point... Jubilation in Northern Ireland, however, has a habit of fading as old hatreds return," said the Sunday Times.

The newspapers — many of which lavished praise on British Prime Minister Tony Blair for his role in the deal — said the crucial test would be whether guerrilla groups in Northern Ireland handed in their weapons.

"There is no peace yet in Northern Ireland, except in the sense that most of the terrorist groups have agreed not to kill anyone until further notice," said the Sunday Telegraph.

"Its people, for all their justified joy, still live in the shadow of the gun. It would be wrong to celebrate 'peace' until the gun has been surrendered."

The next stage of the peace process is an election on June 25 to select participants in a new Northern Irish assembly to run local affairs.

"This is only the beginning. The bitter argu-

U.K. papers hail Irish votes, warn of troubles ahead

LONDON (R) — British newspapers Sunday hailed the overwhelming "yes" votes for a landmark Irish peace deal but said much had to be done before Northern Ireland could bury its violent past.

"It is an astonishing, wonderful and complete victory for the forces of light over darkness for the future over the past for progress over reaction for votes over guns," said the Observer.

In Northern Ireland 71.1 per cent of voters said "yes" to the deal and in the Irish republic 94.4 per cent backed it.

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The next stage of the peace process is an election on June 25 to select participants in a new Northern Irish assembly to run local affairs.

"This is only the beginning. The bitter argu-

ments of the 'no' campaign proved just how much still has to be done... the peace process can never stand still. It must move on," said the Sunday Mirror.

"There is a lot more to do. The agreement which was accepted yesterday remains a framework which has to be built on. The tough bargaining which led up to good Friday was only a taste of what was to come."

Some newspapers said it would be naive to imagine that both communities in Northern Ireland would find it easy to forget the pain and suffering of a 30-year conflict in which 3,600 people had been killed.

"It will take a generation at least before the hurt eases and genuine trust builds. The next few years will be difficult suspicion does not evaporate on the basis of a vote," said the observer.

The Sunday Times said the province had suffered too much for too long to be denied its right to peace and stability now.

"Anyone who tries to thwart the will of the people should be swept aside. Continued terrorism should be ruthlessly suppressed," it said.

The Express Sunday said the Irish question had not been solved yet.

"It will be a long and thorny road, now, on to establishing the assembly, and there will be dissidents' groups on all sides. But as Confucius taught us, even a long journey begins with a first step," it said.

The Observer took the most optimistic line of all.

"The arms question will be solved. In sum Ireland has not enjoyed a better chance of peace this century. It is a great moment for all of us in these islands. A new people, if not a new nation, has been born," it said.

New Zealand considers aid for children of Vietnam veterans

AUCKLAND (AFP) — The New Zealand government is to consider compensating the disabled children of Vietnam veterans exposed to the defoliant Agent Orange, Prime Minister Jenny Shipley said.

Speaking Saturday at the opening of an exhibition "Vietnam — A Struggle for Peace," Ms. Shipley said 30 years after the Vietnam war it was time New Zealanders put behind them any personal views about the rights and wrongs of New Zealand's participation in the war, NZPA reported Sunday.

Ms. Shipley said Vietnam veterans had been treated no differently from other veterans "but there remains one area on which I have some uncertainty and that is the question of any

flow-on effects in relation to the children of veterans who are currently not specifically recognised or covered."

"For this reason the government has begun to consider the case for a review of veterans' claims of children's disabilities," the report quoted her as saying.

In Australia, where a link between the highly toxic defoliant Agent Orange and various medical conditions is already acknowledged, new evidence has also found an increased risk of spina bifida in veterans' children compared with the general population.

The United States government accepted the spina bifida Agent Orange link and has paid compensation. In New Zealand, Vietnam Veterans

Association researcher John Moller has said veterans had counted 179 children with major health difficulties by the early 1980s, NZPA said.

Mr. Moller also told the NZ Listener he and another researcher have evidence attempts were made to manufacture Agent Orange in New Zealand for the U.S. Vietnam war effort.

He and fellow Vietnam veteran Allan Grayling believe "evidence was concealed from us by members of the body politic in New Zealand and Australia," the Listener reported Sunday.

Opposition Labour Party defence spokesman Geoff Braybrook, who was a medic in Vietnam, said he had tried for years to get a government

investigation into whether the chemical was manufactured here for the U.S. war machine.

A 1989 inquiry into the allegations proved inconclusive, but Mr. Braybrook claims vital evidence was never put before the inquiry.

Allegations involve a 1967 memo to then deputy PM Jack Marshall that the chemical manufacturer Ivon Watkins (IWD) of New Plymouth was interested in supplying the U.S. with defoliants, the Listener said.

And in Wellington this week-end napalm victim Kim Phuc — whose agonised face became an international symbol of the horrors of the Vietnam war — helped open an exhibition in remembrance of Vietnam.

Norway's glaciers growing at record pace

BERGEN, Norway (AFP) — Glaciers in western Norway are growing at record speeds, contrary to the current global trend, following heavy rain and snowfall in the 1980s and 1990s, Norwegian daily Bergens Tidende said Sunday.

The face of the Briksdal glacier, an off-shoot of the largest glacier in Norway and mainland Europe, Jostedalsgreen, is growing by an average 18 centimetres per day.

From 1992 to 1997, the

Briksdal grew by 322 metres.

At its current pace, the ice-cap is expected to extend three kilometres from its current position within 50 to 60 years, placing it right at the front door of the popular Briksdal tourist cafe.

The growth of Norway's glaciers is unparalleled, as most of the world's glaciers are melting as a result of global warming. In the Alps, glaciers have melted to about half of their size since the 1850s.

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And the march goes on

JORDAN'S CELEBRATIONS of the 52nd anniversary of independence today offer a unique opportunity not only to pride ourselves on decades of accomplishment and national building but also to take stock of the unfinished business and the challenges that still lie ahead. Indeed, Jordan made great strides in consolidating its independence by putting in place an appropriate political and economic infrastructure. King Abdullah started the process in the twenties and carried it through the thirties and forties. When His Majesty King Hussein took over in 1952, he realised what his grandfather dreamt of accomplishing, freeing the country from foreign domination and turning the Kingdom into a modern state with functioning institutions. The climax of the building of modern Jordan was the King's move in the mid-1950s to Arabise the armed forces, the pillar and mainstay of Jordan's independence and the defender of the country and its political system.

Trials and tribulations, however, did not cease. After the loss of the West Bank in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, Middle East realities changed considerably on all fronts. The Gulf crisis in 1990 further taxed the resources of the Kingdom when hundreds of thousands of Jordanian expatriates returned to the country and Amman was unjustly boycotted for seeking an Arab solution to an Arab conflict.

When the peace process began in 1991 at the Madrid conference, Jordan immediately called for a collective Arab negotiating stand to avoid the pitfalls of the Camp David accord between Egypt and Israel and to ensure a comprehensive and lasting peace. To our dismay, however, a united Arab front did not materialise and the Palestinians chose to go their separate way by striking the Oslo accord, which looked promising at the time but turned sour as the days went by. As a result, Jordan negotiated a peace treaty with Israel that ended all claims to Jordan being an alternate homeland for the Palestinians and, with the recognition of Jordan's western borders, ensured that the Palestinian people's struggle for their own independence and sovereignty would endure.

The state-building process, meanwhile, continues. The dialogue that the Monarch has launched among the three branches of government and the 13 professional organisations is evidence that the country, both leadership and people, continues to engage in soul-searching efforts to make the Kingdom stronger and healthier in every way. As we commemorate our independence, we salute our forefathers and recognise all the efforts that they put in to make the country more prosperous and progressive. We pay tribute to our King, his wise leadership and his determination to persist in the process of state-building on all fronts in the most positive and constructive way possible.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Muness Razzaz said the U.S. is not serious about the peace process and for this reason the peace option has collapsed. Had the Washington been serious about establishing peace between the Israelis and the Arabs it would have taken steps towards that end, for instance, by cancelling visits to the Jewish state by speakers of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, according to the writer. Razzaz said it is clear now that the world is under the influence of one superpower, and the Middle East is under the sole Israeli superpower through the Zionist influence on the U.S. Congress. In light of this situation, he said, there can be no peace in this region unless the Arabs take matters into their own hands and follow the example of Hizbollah resistance group which, through its repeated attacks on Israel, it forced Netanyahu to seek a withdrawal of his forces from Lebanon.

Al Dustour's Mohammad Jayousi tackled the trade relations between Jordan and the Palestine self-rule areas describing them as facing a wall of obstacles due to Israel's stand and its determination to retain its hegemony on the Palestinian economy. The writer referred to Bassam Saket, president of the Jordan Trade Association, who at a press conference exposed Israel's measures to obstruct the flow of goods between Jordan and Palestine and urged the government to take immediate and speedy measures to ensure the removal of all hurdles in the path of mutual trade. According to Dr. Saket, Jordan last year sold a mere \$11.9 million worth of its products to Palestine while Israel dominated the Palestinian markets selling them a billion of dollars worth of Israeli goods. Indeed and despite Israeli official statements to the contrary, trade between Palestine and Jordan has been hampered even more under the Likud administration and by Israel's illegal practices in the occupied Palestinian territory. The writer said the Jordanian government ought to take prompt action to solve this problem.

Economic Review

Dr. Yusuf Mansur

Role of government in creating a competitive economy

ECONOMISTS, in their attempt to create a more competitive Jordanian economy, must be aware of several pitfalls that, if not avoided, could lead to an economy that is even more Keynesian — one which is based solely on government spending — than the present one. Government involvement for the sake of creating a more competitive economy need not be quantitative; the government's role should be more qualitative and microeconomic in nature. However, before we delve into the scope of governmental microeconomic policy, a certain clarification must be made.

There is a misconception about the meaning of the term "competitive advantage of a nation"; it does not mean "comparative advantage" and, therefore, should not be viewed as an heuristic alternative to it. The two are not synonymous: competitiveness alludes to making choices while comparative strengths and weaknesses relate to the endowments of the economy. The focus of government policy must shift away from that of looking at only the industry. The focal point must be clusters, the regional grouping of companies that are comprised of firms that produce similar products (which may be viewed as substitutes), their suppliers, firms that produce complementary products to the basic product, service providers, and providers of infrastructure.

Thus, policy is not focused on the benefits of a narrow group of producers; but rather on clusters. Furthermore, the dialogue that may ensue between govern-

ment and cluster firms does not reduce to seeking, as in the case of industrial policy, government subsidies, protectionism and the removal of rivalry, an important element in the making of any competitive market. In other words, the government must create clusters and cluster-based policies, not industrial policies. In order to create specialised and highly trained factors, the government must do the following: create specialised education and training programmes; help universities direct their research towards clusters; support the creation of knowledge about the clusters through assisting in information gathering; and improve specialised transportation, infrastructure and communications to address the special needs of consumers.

To improve competition in a market the government must remove barriers to competition, particularly monopolistic practices; organise government departments around clusters; attract foreign direct investment to clusters not industries; and promote the clusters for purposes of developing exports. In other words, after dismantling monopolies, the focus must shift from products, industries, or sectors to clusters. Support industries must also receive the attention of government. Suppliers and recipients of products within a cluster must be brought together in town-hall type meetings to discuss problems, obstacles, and the means to resolving them. Suppliers from other locations and clusters may be invited to enter a specific cluster in order to widen and deepen (horizontally and

vertically integrate) the cluster which in turn creates more value-added. Free trade zones and industrial parks must also be based on clusters, instead of specific industries in order to create synergies and deepening of the cluster.

As for the demand of the consumer, the government can partake in several actions to create specific and sophisticated demand within a cluster. Regulation must be such that it encourages innovation, the achievement of high standards, the continuous upgrade of technology and products, and the fostering of the timely adoption of technology. The government must also make the testing and qualification or certification of products inexpensive, better yet free, and available to all the producers in a cluster. Furthermore, the government must demand sophisticated, high quality products in its bids and procurement contracts. As the largest consumer in the economy the government, if it accepts cheap and inferior products, will encourage a culture of low value-added.

Deep within the psyche of development experts lies the desire for government intervention in the economy, à la macro style. New development policy that aims to involve the government must also keep in mind that it is the collection of small changes (and not the lazy broad-brush actions, which alone do not work), applied in a timely and sophisticated manner, which will bring about that aggregate personal best of Jordan. The time is now, happy anniversary Jordan, let us not wait too long.

How many more will die hungry before U.N. rules are changed?

By Richard Dowden

HERE WE go again. Starving Africa pictures on television. This time in Sudan — again. Hundreds of thousands of people, maybe a million, face starvation. And here, in the next frame, are the aid workers telling us how bad it is but how, with our help, they can save lives. British singer Sir Bob Geldof is back in business, too, suggesting that the Red Cross send an expeditionary force of aid workers to solve the problem. In the newspaper the aid agencies use the most ghastly picture of hunger as advertisements to press home their pleas for money.

Once again the circle is complete. The aid agencies call the television stations, give them free lifts to the hunger zone and tell the story. We watch, our hearts are touched and the aid agencies recoup their efforts and expenses in a fund-raising appeal. A benign circle? It seems like one but for the lack of an answer to this question: are the television stations and the aid agencies telling the whole truth about this famine?

No. The famine in Sudan is in one province, Bahr Al Ghazal and it has been caused, quite deliberately, by one man, Kerubino Kuanyin Bol.

Bahr Al Ghazal has been in the front line of the north-south civil war in Sudan for 15 years. It was already sinking below subsistence level. Last year Mr. Kerubino, a rebel commander from Bahr Al Ghazal, defected to the side of the Sudanese government. With its blessing he spent the rest of the year razing his own region, killing hundreds of people and stealing their cattle, food and seed corn.

His savagery forced thousands more to flee from their homes with only what food they could carry. Then in February this year when the survivors most needed food aid and seeds to plant for this year's harvest, the Islamist government in Khartoum refused the United Nations permission to fly to Bahr Al Ghazal. The ban lasted two months. The result — famine.

Kerubino, nicknamed "the Fool" in Bahr Al Ghazal, meanwhile changed sides again, largely because he was not given a sufficiently important title by the government. He has been welcomed back by the rebel movement, the Sudan

People's Liberation Army, SPLA, though in Bahr Al Ghazal, not surprisingly, they want him dead.

The U.N. and the aid agencies were aware last year of the depredations of Kerubino and new that the flight ban by the Khartoum government would probably mean a lot of people would starve. But in Sudan the U.N.'s humanitarian operation, known as Operation Lifeline Sudan, operates only by agreement with both the Khartoum government and the SPLA. Under the agreement drawn up in 1991 between the U.N., the government of Khartoum and the rebels, the U.N. and aid agencies working under its umbrella, must have permission from both sides before they can move a grain of food to a starving village. Every single aid flight, its destination, exact content and personnel accompanying it are subject to inspection — and so the whim — of government and rebels, including of course Mr. Kerubino and his ilk.

The main aim of both sides is to direct as much food aid as possible in the direction of their own troops and as little as possible to areas where the other side might benefit. The U.N. is reduced to a puppet being jerked around by both sides having to balance the provision of relief need to an area on the one side with a dubious delivery to the other. The government is worse at imposing restrictions on Operation Lifeline Sudan than the SPLA, but both armies help themselves to U.N. aid. To this extent the U.N. and the aid agencies have fed this 15 year-long war.

If the price for this was that the civilians in Sudan were also fed, it would be worth paying but they are not. Worse, the rules of Operation Lifeline Sudan prevent the U.N. telling the truth about the causes of starvation and the truth about people like Kerubino. When he was laying waste to Bahr Al Ghazal the U.N. was silent. In February the government's ban on food aid to Bahr Al Ghazal was mentioned only twice in U.N. publicity and only as a "cause for concern," hardly the sort of language to create the scale of outrage needed to create international pressure on the Khartoum government to get the ban lifted. Only now when the Khartoum gov-

ernment sense bad publicity from pictures of starving people does it choose to allow the U.N. to make more flights into South Sudan. And the reaction of the U.N.? An unctuous thank-you to Khartoum for its "timely approval."

Operation Lifeline Sudan, now nine-years-old, has failed to deliver food when and where it was needed even though it knew famine was developing. Unlike some, I am not one of those who believe that the aid business looks after its own interests by deliberately waiting till people start dying before they bring in the cameras. But I do believe that in South Sudan, Operation Lifeline Sudan is in danger of complicity in famine.

So why doesn't the U.N. just tear up the book of rules, ignore the Khartoum government and the rebels and fly food when and where it is needed, daring the government to shoot the planes out of the sky? That is what some small aid agencies operating outside the Operation Lifeline Sudan do, and they find pilots and companies willing to risk their lives and planes to do so. Not one has been shot down so far.

The problem is national sovereignty. U.N. rules insist that the authority of the Sudan government is respected even though it has not ruled some of those southern regions for 15 years. It is clear now that they never will again. Whether or not the south splits off as an independent state, the Arabised Muslim north will never again be able to dominate the south.

That makes Sudan a "failed state" and until a new dispensation is sorted out, the U.N. should regard it as such. It should reject the "sovereignty" of the Khartoum government outside areas it does not control. Instead it should mandate its aid agencies to intervene for humanitarian purposes whenever and wherever necessary.

A more determined U.N. which spoke truth and recognised reality instead of diplomatic niceties might also find donors more willing to provide the funds it desperately needs.

The author writes for *The Economist*. This comment is reprinted from *The Independent*.

LETTERS

A lot of painful whys?

To the editor:

IT ALL happened so fast I barely had time to comprehend what was going on.

It was 8:30 p.m. and I had just turned onto busy Mecca Street after buying fruit. There was a large truck in the left lane waiting for a green light to make a U-turn. In the lane next to it, the car ahead of me sped through the intersection. As the driver accelerated, I saw what looked like a large, black plastic garbage bag fly into the air, tumbling, and observed some of its contents sail a few feet towards my bumper.

I suddenly became aware of several men quickly climbing out of the truck on the left. At the same time, my eyes focused on the object that only seconds before had been bouncing on the road towards my car. It was a small tennis shoe. Two of the men knelt down and lifted up the "garbage bag." That's when I realised it was a child.

I hit the brakes and my emergency flashers as the car behind me started honking. I watched the men run to a waiting car on the other side of the intersection. They deposited the small body in the car, and the car drove off, and the men ran back to their waiting truck just in time to catch the next green light.

The whole incident took less than 60 seconds. No fuss. No bother. No police or ambulance. No traffic jam. I was shocked.

Perhaps part of my reaction was culture shock. Thoughts raced through my mind. I come from a place where a minor "fender bender" automatically becomes a full-scale bureaucratic event. To think that citizens could deal with the situation so quickly, so efficiently, boggles the mind. People in my world are so conditioned to thoughts of "don't touch an injured person because you might harm her more" that we are reluctant to act on our own in an emergency. I couldn't believe that people had had the nerve to risk the boy's life by picking him up.

On the other hand, I wonder why it is that these men were able to react so rapidly. Is the event of a human body being hit by a car so common that almost everyone knows what to do automatically? And what of the impatient driver? People seem to be so obsessed with getting to their destination that they tune out everything around them on the road. People here in Amman seem to drive by the "honk method": They just keep going on their merry way — anywhere on the road — until they hear a honk which means "I'm already in this space." They drive fast and show few signs that they are aware of what is happening around them. I don't even know for certain that the car which drove away with the boy was the same one that hit him. Did that driver even realise he had run over someone?

As I pulled myself together, put the car in gear, and continued on my way home, I became angry. Why was that child out on that street? What uncaring adult allowed him to be on that busy corner, in the dark, wearing dark clothing, selling him gum or candy or cigarettes? Why is it that every flock of sheep or herd of goats in Amman has a shepherd to keep them safe, but precious children are left to cope with the traffic for hours at a time on their own? Of course, that's not really the answer, either. Why does the world have so little regard for the thousands (millions?) of children like him who go to bed hungry every night and never learn to read because they are so busy selling newspapers on the street corner and trying not to starve that they don't have time to go to school?

As I drove on down the street, I began to cry. But it wasn't my shock at the callous efficiency of the men who stopped to pick up the boy nor was it my anger at a world that put a child of only five or six in such a position that caused the tears on the cheeks. What hurt me was the realisation that the only emotional reaction I had been throughout the incident came from the victim's two companions. One boy stood on the corner staring in shock at the spot where his friend had been only a moment earlier. The other boy — no older than seven or eight — turned his face to a street sign and shook with sobs. That image will stay with me for a long time to come.

Did anyone else cry for the small victim?

Becci McDaniel
 Amman

Human File

The Indonesian Rome

By Dr. Waleed M. Saad

THERE ARE many explanations for the meltdown in Indonesia last week that culminated in the down fall of President Suharto and the swearing in of his Vice President Bacharuddin Habibie. The newly-appointed Habibie is generally viewed as a caretaker leader during the transitional period when the country may usher in a fully fledged pluralistic democracy. Most observers have attributed the end of the 32-year-long Suharto rule to the lack of political reforms. Other analysts saw in the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) \$40 billion financial rescue package and the economic and financial conditions that accompanied the IMF deal as the straw that broke the camel's back and brought an end to an era in the country. As a result the IMF is increasingly spotlighted as the principle culprit for the woes of many countries and peoples due to its fixation with economic and financial reforms at the expense of other considerations, especially the peoples' direct economic, social and cultural rights.

The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) which monitors the application of the International Covenant on ESCRs has had yet another occasion during its just ended session in Geneva to lock horns with the IMF on its one-track-minded approach to the plight of many developing countries. As valid as the structuring that IMF slams on many poor nations such as Indonesia from strictly economic and financial points of view, many committee members sounded the alarm about the dire neglect of other policy considerations which tend to exacerbate conditions for many peoples of the world and end up sparking the ignition of political tremors.

Many developing countries reeling under the impact of cascading financial crises have had to endure austerity programmes and widespread restructuring of their feeble economies in order to qualify for IMF rescue plans. Some of these conditions: slapped on several countries have ended up decimating employment, cutting wages, causing inflation and undermining social safety nets. As a result, there is a chorus of voices now calling for globalisation with a social dimension to avoid the social and political backlash Indonesia has had to endure of late.

It was also noted that large scale reduction in barriers to international investment and trade have indeed created an integrated world economy. Under pressure to attract investment, many developing countries, it was noted by some observers, have been lured into creating export processing zones that ended up exploiting cheap labour. It is now being alleged, therefore, that the IMF structural adjustment programmes and the powerful trends of globalisation have negatively impacted the lives of the average working men and women across the developing world culminating in social inequality within and between nations.

There is a call therefore on governments not to abdicate their responsibilities by allowing the global economy to be dictated by unrestrained competition and financial markets. A new integrated and balanced approach to global economy is therefore called for. In this vein, reference was made to the World Summit for Social Development held in Copenhagen in March 1995 which drew attention to the need for a reorientation in the global economy with full employment as one of its key objectives. It is also asserted that women are more negatively impacted by globalisation than men. In the global search for cheap labour, women workers and child labourers are adversely affected. The list is rather long, therefore, where the IMF, the World Bank (WB) and even the World Trade Organisation (WTO) have gone wrong?

With all fairness, though, the international community, whether the rich or part of it, cannot heap all the blame for all the shortcomings of globalisation or privatisation or free market economy on these international monetary institutions. These institutions are nothing more and nothing less than what the international community would like them to be. Take for example the IMF, the main villain in most allegations about the pitfalls of the existing economic order, it is actually governed by nations that we all put there. The same goes for WTO and WB. If any of us feels that these institutions are abusing their powers or misleading the world or sacrificing one group of nations for the benefit of others, then all we have to do is change the composition of their policy making mechanisms and have them adopt new and more balanced orientations.

In the end, it is democratic accountability and transparency at the national and international levels that can affect changes of directions. The poor countries need to be democratically oriented not only on the political level but also on the economic, social and cultural fronts as well. Once the weak states become more democratic on all fronts, the international community will have a better opportunity to be more democratically governed. This way, the perspectives of all sides could be taken into consideration.

and the C

Editor's note: This is the third in a series of articles on archaeological sites and the application of the law of the sea to the Dead Sea.

IN MOST people's minds, the infamous biblical cities of Sodom and Gomorrah evoke visions of a wickedness that the Lord punished by a fiery destruction of a fiery city. Where these cities may have existed and where their remains might be located today, has longed scholars and popular mystery alike. One school of thought has always located them along the south-east Dead Sea coast in modern Jordan.

The Genesis 19 passage says: "Then the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven. And he overthrew these cities, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. But Lot's wife behind him looked back, and she became a pillar of salt. And Abraham went early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the Lord, and he looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah and toward all the land of the valley, and behold, and lo, the smoke of the land went up like the smoke of a furnace. Sodom and Gomorrah were two of the five 'Cities of the Plain' mentioned in the Bible and other biblical accounts in the book of Genesis.

The most comprehensive and serious work that has been done along the south-east Dead Sea coastal region has comprised excavations, surveys, geological analyses and other scholarly studies by an interdisciplinary team headed by professors R. Thomas Schaub of Indiana University of Pennsylvania, USA, and Dr. Walter East of Valparaiso University, Indiana, USA.

Working since 1975 in the region from Ghor Mazra'a in the north to Ghor Kheirizrah in the south, the project formally called the Expedition to the South-east Dead Sea Plain

The leg

By Dilip Hiro

IN APRIL two of its five littoral states moved towards resolving a contentious issue of the legal status of the Caspian Sea, a consequence of the Soviet Union's collapse. Russia, President Boris Yeltsin and Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev signed their respective government to sign an agreement drafted by their foreign ministers in Bishkek, a Russian port on the Caspian, on dividing the sea-bed on the basis of "equal distance from the shoreline." It was at first announced that the deal would be signed on April 28 when Nazarbayev was in Moscow. But it was reported on April 29 that Yeltsin would not take part in the signing.

The agreement between the two countries marks a shift in the Russian position on the Caspian. Is it a sea or a lake, or something in between? Having maintained so far that it was a sea, Russia has now altered its stance, albeit with a rider, by distinguishing between sea water and sea-bed. According to the international maritime law of the 1970s, a country with a seashore has full sovereignty up to 200 kilometres out at sea. In the case of a lake with its banks in different countries, the neighbouring waters are shared among themselves, treating the water's surface as land. Lake Caspian, for instance, is divided among its five international frontiers: Russia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkmenistan and Iran. As long as there were two coast

Are the remains of Sodom, Gomorrah and the Cities of the Plain located in south-east Jordan?

Editor's note: This is the third in a series of articles on archaeological sites and explorations along the south-east coastal plain of the Dead Sea.

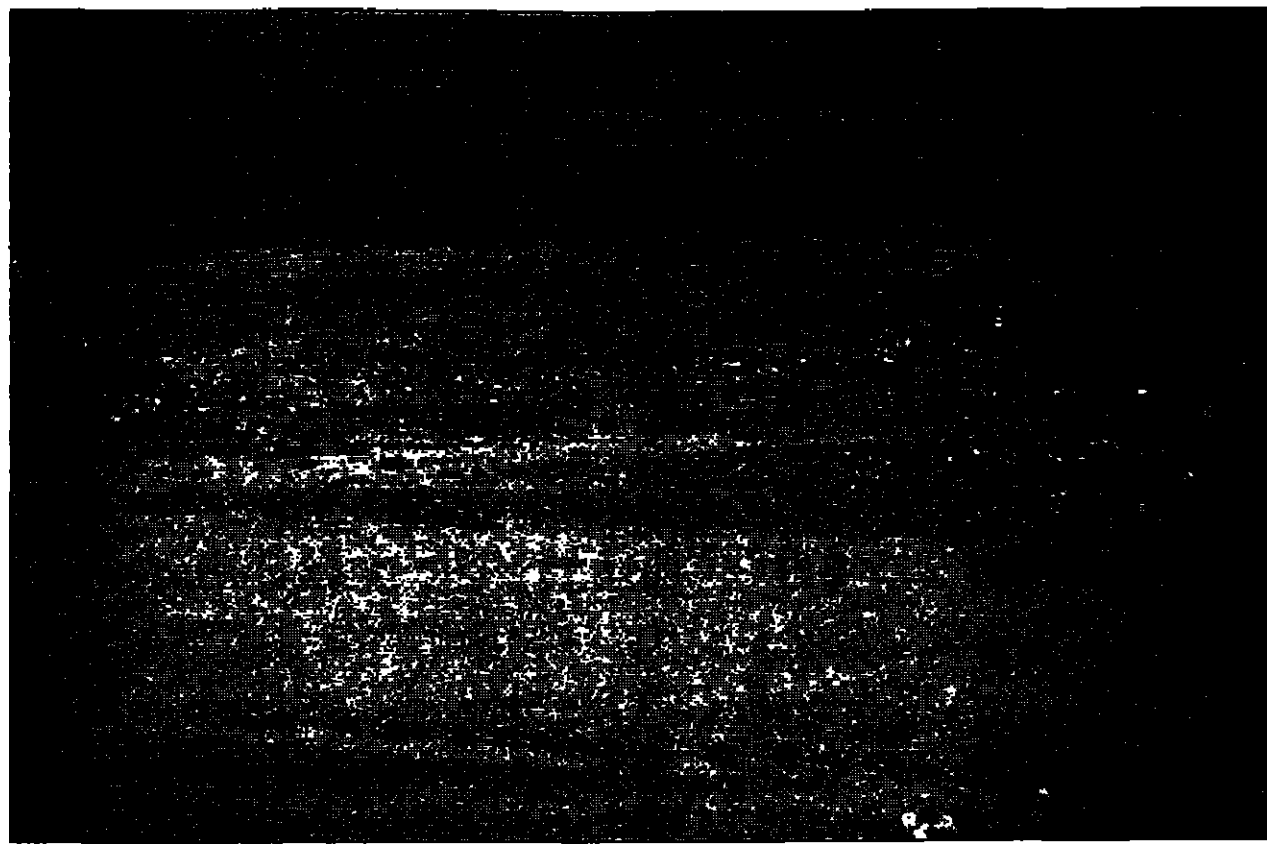
IN MOST people's minds, the infamous biblical cities of Sodom and Gomorrah evoke visions of a wickedness that the Lord punished by a fiery destruction of these two cities. Where those cities may have existed, and where their remains might be located today, has intrigued scholars and popular mystery merchants for many centuries. One school of thought has always located them along the south-east Dead Sea coast, in modern Jordan.

The Genesis 19 passage says: "Then the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven. And he overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. But Lot's wife behind him looked back, and she became a pillar of salt. And Abraham went early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the Lord and he looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah and toward all the land of the valley, and behold, and lo, the smoke of the land went up like the smoke of a furnace."

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The most comprehensive and serious work that has been done along the south-east Dead Sea coastal region has comprised excavations, surveys, geological analyses and other scholarly studies by an inter-disciplinary team headed by professors R. Thomas Schaub of Indiana University of Pennsylvania (U.S.A.) and Dr. Walter Rast of Valparaiso University (Indiana, U.S.A.).

Working since 1975 in the region from Ghor Mazra'a in the north to Ghor Khneizirah in the south, the project formally called the Expedition to the South-east Dead Sea Plain



The view from Numeira, northwards along the Dead Sea coast: is this the location of the 'Cities of the Plain' mentioned in the book of Genesis? (photos by Rami G. Khouri)

in Jordan has dedicated itself to studying a series of major antiquities sites dating primarily from the Early Bronze Age, the period around 3500-2000 B.C. when walled towns and 'urbanism' first appeared in human history.

The work to date has identified over 30 sites from the Early Bronze Age, including walled towns and massive cemeteries. One of the fascinating though unintended sidelights of this work has been a recurring revival of the scholarly debate about the location, date, and fate of the five Cities of the Plain, which biblical and archaeological scholars have hotly debated for centuries: "were they actually five cities? Where were they located? When did they exist? Indeed, did they ever exist at all, or are they simply an ancient Semitic legend or folk-tale that was preserved in the literary evidence of the Bible?"

When they finished their survey of the south-eastern shores of the Dead Sea in 1973, Rast and Schaub had identified at least five Early Bronze Age settlements, all

of which dated from around 3000-2350 B.C. Most appear to be walled towns. The five most prominent sites, from north to south, are Bab edh-Dhra', Numeira, Safi, Feifeh, and Khneizirah. Could these EB sites be seriously considered as the remnants of the five Cities of the Plain? Could they possibly correspond to the five biblical cities of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim and "Bela (that is, Zoar)?"

In the preliminary report of their 1973 survey, Rast and Schaub stated: "...the sites may bear on the biblical tradition of the 'cities of the plain' (Genesis 14:18; 19), long believed to be located in 'this area' and sometimes thought to have been submerged beneath the shallow waters of the Dead Sea. If the biblical traditions find roots going back as far as the Early Bronze Age, the sites reported here may be of some importance."

The debate was further fuelled by the epigraphist of the Ebla excavations in northern Syria, Giovanni Pettinato, who thought, in

1975, that the five Cities of the Plain were mentioned in some of the 3rd Millennium B.C. cuneiform tablets excavated in the rich archives of Ebla. He suggested that all five cities were mentioned in one of the tablets, listed in the same order as in the Bible. Most of the Ebla tablets

date to the period from around 2650-2350 B.C. — which is precisely during the lifetime of Bab edh-Dhra', Numeira and other Early Bronze Age sites in south Jordan.

Pettinato's ideas have been seriously challenged by other epigraphists who dispute his readings. While

the controversy about the correct interpretation of the Ebla tablets may or may not shed light on the location and date of the five Cities of the Plain, it remains possible that Ebla may have had commercial contacts with contemporary Early Bronze Age towns in south Jordan.

The mystery of the Cities of the Plain is confounded by the fact that the only historical reference to the cities is in the Bible, and the Bible is a notoriously imprecise guide to historical fact, geographical location or exact and verifiable historical dates. As Schaub has noted, talking about the Genesis accounts: "The tradition of the Cities of the Plain is a complex of ancient and hazy recollections that probably go back to some actual event. When one tries to consider the possible identification of our EB sites in south Jordan with the Cities of the Plain, there are a number of things to keep in mind. The long history of the biblical texts is very intertwined, and it is hard to fix a firm date for the historical traditions that may lie behind the literary traditions."

The Bible provides several clues about the location of the Cities of the Plain: they were probably located east of the Dead Sea, near Moab, in an area of lush

vegetation associated with a kikkar, or circular plain, near some barren, desolate regions, and also associated with bitumen and salt formations. All of these elements are found in the south-east plain of the Dead Sea, and some of them, but not all, are also found north and west of the Dead Sea. Schaub warns that "we need to qualify the biblical tradition, for there is nothing magical about the number five. There is some serious doubt among scholars about whether there were ever five cities that existed at once."

The Genesis 18 and 19 texts only mention the destruction of two towns, Sodom and Gomorrah, though all five towns are mentioned in the Genesis 14 accounts. Some biblical scholars feel that the Genesis accounts may go back to a single town. Others feel that the biblical accounts may have reflected events that took place at two cities north of the Dead Sea and two south of the Dead Sea. The city of Zoar, with which the Lot traditions are also connected, may have been added to these at a later stage to produce the tradition of the five Cities of the Plain that has been handed down to us today.

Genesis 14 recounts the tale of an alliance of four kings from the north (probably Syria) who marched to do battle against five kings of the Cities of the Plain who had refused to pay tribute to the northern kings. The five kings of south Jordan were beaten and their cities destroyed, and the four kings returned to Syria having taken captive Lot, Abraham's nephew. Abraham pursued them to near Damascus, defeated them, and returned to the area of the Cities of the Plain with his freed nephew Lot.

In the Genesis 13 accounts, Abraham and Lot argue and part ways: "And Lot lifted up his eyes, and saw that the Jor-

dan Valley was well watered everywhere like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt in the direction of Zoar; this was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. So Lot chose for himself all the Jordan Valley, and Lot journeyed east; thus they separated from each other. Abraham dwelt in the land of Canaan, while Lot dwelt among the cities of the valley and moved his tent as far as Sodom. Now the men of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against the Lord."

The date of the archaeological remains in south Jordan appears to be out of sequence with the generally accepted date for the Abrahamic period, when the Bible recounts the events associated with the Cities of the Plain. Most scholars assume that Abraham existed around 1900-1800 B.C., while others place him as late as 1700 B.C. or as early as 2300 B.C. Some respected biblical scholars (such as David N. Freedman) feel the Genesis 14 stories "most likely... belong roughly to the period around 2400 and 2100, perhaps around 2300-2200 B.C."

The major destruction levels at Bab edh-Dhra' and Numeira date from around 2350 B.C. — that is, 400-500 years earlier than the generally accepted date for Abrahamic times, though very close to or precisely within the period that some respected scholars associate with the biblical accounts of the Cities of the Plain. At least three of the five sites surveyed by Rast and Schaub (Bab edh-Dhra', Numeira and Feifeh) show considerable evidence of a violent, fiery destruction, and all five were never re-inhabited after their destruction or abandonment at the end of the Early Bronze Age.



One of the large 'chapel houses' for the burial of the dead at Bab edh-Dhra' during the Early Bronze Age

Troubled waters

The legal status of the Caspian Sea is no easy sailing

By Dilip Hiro

ON APRIL 9 two of its five littoral states moved towards resolving the contentious issue of the legal status of the Caspian Sea, a consequence of the Soviet Union's collapse. Russian President Boris Yeltsin and Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev instructed their respective governments to sign an agreement drafted by their foreign minister in Astrakhan, a Russian port on the Caspian, on dividing the sea-bed on the basis of "equal distance from the shoreline." It was at first announced that the deal would be signed on April 28 when Nazarbayev was in Moscow. But it was reported on that day the signing would not take place until Yeltsin's visit to Kazakhstan in June.

The agreement between the two countries marks a shift in the Russian position on the Caspian. Is it a conventional sea or a lake, or something in between? Having maintained so far that it was a sea, Moscow has now altered its stance, albeit with a rider, by distinguishing between sea water and sea-bed.

According to the international maritime law of the 1970s, a country with a seashore has full sovereign rights up to 20 kilometres out at sea. In the case of a lake with its banks in different countries, the neighbours share it among themselves, treating the water's surface as land. Lake Victoria, for instance, is divided between Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, their international frontiers running through the lake.

As long as there were two countries surrounding the Caspian, mea-

suring 169,381 square kilometres — the Soviet Union and Iran — the matter was simple and defined in their Treaties of Friendship (1921) and Commerce and Navigation (1940). The first treaty provided equal navigational rights; the second specified a 6.5 kilometres exclusive fishing zone (later extended to 16 kilometres) along the coast. Beyond these boundaries the two states shared equal rights in the inland sea. There was no delimiting of the Caspian into two national sectors and no international fluvial border running through it.

With the Soviet Union's collapse in December 1991, three more independent states sprung up along the Caspian's shores: Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan.

After the revolution in Iran in 1979, though political relations between Tehran and Moscow fluctuated from cordial to frosty, economic cooperation grew. In the mid-1980s they began exploring the Caspian jointly for oil and gas.

Elusive consensus

With the Soviet Union's collapse in December 1991, three more independent states sprung up along the Caspian's shores: Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan. At Iran's initiative a Caspian Sea Cooperation Organisation (CASCO) was formed in February 1992. Its May 1995

meeting in Almaty instructed the five foreign ministries' legal departments to devise a legal regime for the Caspian based on a consensus. At stake were national security, navigational rights and the tapping of water and sea-bed resources. Given the diverse nature of these subjects, an overall consensus has so far eluded the littoral states.

Azerbaijan, with an offshore oil industry developed by Moscow since 1949, was the first to declare unilaterally a national sector in the Caspian and allocate certain oil fields in it to a Western-led oil con-

sortium in mid-1993, a deal that was ratified in September 1994. Kazakhstan followed suit. Russia and Iran objected. In October 1995 Moscow complained to the United Nations secretary-general. Referring to the 1921 and 1940 Soviet-Iranian Treaties, it argued that since claims of one littoral country could harm the interests of others, exploitation of the Caspian's marine resources should be conditional upon a consensus based on the principle of collective ownership of those resources. But nothing came of it, mainly because CASCO, a regional body, was addressing the issue.

In essence, Moscow and Tehran wanted an extension of the Soviet-Iranian treaties to the new littoral states. The joint exploitation of the Caspian by all littoral states, they knew, would end in the transporting of the extracted fuel by the pipelines passing through Russia or Iran, the only countries with access to the high seas. The idea was opposed by Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, with Turkmenistan first allying with them (in September 1996), and then breaking away (in mid-1997) when it clashed with Baku over two oil-bearing offshore areas the latter claimed as its own.

Baku and Almaty rejected the Russian reasoning that since there was a continuous waterway between the Caspian and the Black Sea in the north — consisting of several lakes, canals and the Volga and Don rivers — the Caspian was a sea. They argued that since a third country's ship would have to sail through Russian territory to navigate the Caspian, the latter was not a conventional sea. The Caspian, they concluded, was more of a lake than a sea.

Yet there was some progress at CASCO. It agreed to distinguish between the sea water, the source of 95 per cent of the world's output of caviar and the sea-bed, under which lie fossil fuels. In May 1996 it set individual fishing quotas which were accepted.

By contrast, when Moscow gave an oil drilling contract to Lukoil, the leading Russian state-owned company, in the Caspian area in late 1997, Almaty objected, saying that the areas lay in its sector. At stake were petroleum deposits of up to four billion barrels.

... Moscow and Tehran wanted an extension of the Soviet-Iranian treaties to the new littoral states.

Russia breaks ranks

To resolve the dispute the Russian and Kazakh presidents met in January. "The absence of a common solution puts brakes on exploitation of the Caspian's mineral resources, breeds discord and stands in the way of solving economic and urgent ecological tasks," they stated in a joint communiqué. This set the scene for a fruitful meeting between their foreign ministers at Astrakhan which in turn led to another round of talks between Yeltsin and Nazarbayev.

By agreeing to demarcate national sectors on the sea-bed, Yeltsin broke ranks with Iran and Turkmenistan. Earlier they had together proposed at CASCO that the sea-bed resources should be explored within the context of national sectors to be determined by mutual negotiations — taking into consideration the length of coastline, the degree of use of the resources in the past, and the size of investment — and approved by all member-states.

Since the Yeltsin-Nazarbayev deal on April 9 did not have unanimous approval, the Kazakh president was

defensive. "This agreement is just about the sea-bed and not the water in the sea, as some states have said," he explained. "The sea itself will be demilitarised and shared generally." But the realisation of the latter statement would require the active cooperation of Iran, which is disappointed by Moscow's policy shift.

Since Russia and Kazakhstan occupy an almost equal length of the upper half of the Caspian shore, on the opposite sides, delimiting the sea-bed should prove trouble-free. In contrast, demarcating the lower half of the Caspian sea-bed, with the shoreline shared almost equally by Azerbaijan, Iran and Turkmenistan, is likely to prove tricky. Iran will probably insist on a division of the sea-bed which affords it common under-water borders with both Russia and Kazakhstan, from whom it is now separated on land. This may not be forthcoming, given the ill-will between it and Azerbaijan. Yielding to pressure from Washington, Baku has virtually excluded Tehran from its thriving oil industry plans. And, with offshore Caspian petroleum, extracted by the Western-led Azerbaijan International Operating Company, already flowing, Baku will feel confident enough to frustrate Tehran.

So while Yeltsin and Nazarbayev took a step to untangle the complex issue of the Caspian's legal status, a comprehensive treaty, covering maritime security, navigation and the exploitation of sea water and sea-bed resources acceptable to the five littoral states remains a long way off.

— Middle East International

Handwritten signature or text in Arabic script.

Arab Gulf states move to curb budget deficit

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab Gulf oil producers are taking measures to prevent their budget deficit from spinning out of control because of a sharp decline in crude prices and high projected spending, experts have said.

The six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries could suffer from a surge of more than 60 per cent in their combined budget shortfall this year in the absence of austerity measures to make up for lower oil earnings.

"Some of them have already announced their intention to cut actual expenditure and I think the others will follow suit," said Mohammad Assumi, chief economist at the state-controlled Emirates Industrial Bank (EIB).

"Gulf countries will not allow the deficit to rise

sharply after their strenuous efforts over the past years to bring it under control ... But I don't think the cuts will be large as this would affect growth," he told Agence France Presse.

In a study earlier this year, EIB predicted a 60 per cent surge in the total GCC budget deficit if oil prices do not improve through the year.

It said the 1998 deficit was projected at around \$12.44 billion, nearly 59 per cent higher than the 1997 shortfall of \$7.8 billion.

The increase was due to an expected decline in revenues to around \$80.7 billion from \$74.3 billion.

Most GCC members forecast high spending this year as they had expected the oil market to extend its strong performance in the previous two years.

Saudi Arabia, the world's dominant oil power, planned

to spend as much as \$52.2 billion in 1998 as it assumed a crude price of \$16 a barrel. But the price of its crude has remained as low as \$11-\$12 this year and its deficit could swell in the absence of improvement and spending cuts.

The \$4.8-billion shortfall could climb to \$10.66 billion by the end of the year if oil prices averaged \$14, according to Henry Azzam, chief economist at the Saudi National Commercial Bank.

"Of course, tackling the budget deficit is a top priority for the kingdom," said Ihsan Abu Huleika, a Saudi economic expert. "I think the government will take measures to rationalise expenditure so the budget will not suffer from a large deficit at the end of the year," he added.

Kuwait has also announced plans to slash spending by around 25 per cent to avert what officials called an "economic catastrophe," while Qatar said it would also tighten its belt.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has not announced similar plans but its federal budget has recorded surpluses in most years.

In Oman, the minister of national economy, Mohammad Makki, said last week that ministries had been told to stick to spending levels, while there would be measures to reduce other expenditure and increase non-oil revenue.

Unlike its five GCC partners, Bahrain does not rely heavily on oil income given its limited crude production and reserves.

Spending cuts over the past years have enabled the GCC countries to regain control over the budget deficit after it hit a record

\$61 billion in 1991.

This was because they contributed more than \$50 billion to a U.S.-led offensive to eject Iraqi invasion forces from Kuwait.

The shortfall was cut to one of its lowest levels in 1997 although most member states overshot spending projections as they were tempted to spend by high oil prices.

The deficit accounted for nearly 3.3 per cent of the gross domestic product last year compared with more than 30 per cent in 1991.

"I believe Gulf states are serious in tackling the financial deficit," Mr. Assumi said. "Their recent announcements that they are ready to make further reduction in their oil output reflect this seriousness."

Britain launches productivity crusade

LONDON (AFP) — British Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown has launched a crusade aimed at improving productivity in Britain and bridging the wide gap with its international competitors.

"To achieve this we need a new national economic purpose," Mr. Brown said in a statement.

"This will be a key theme of our policy thinking in the coming months, and I will consider seriously proposals emerging from this work in the run-up to the next budget," Mr. Brown added.

"I am worried that the gap between ourselves and Germany, France, but most of all America is not only high, but seems to have widened over the last 10 years," he told the BBC.

The productivity gap with the United States was about 40 per cent and 20 per cent with Germany, he said. In the auto industry, there was a 50 per cent productivity gap with Japan and a 55 per cent gap in telecoms compared with Germany.

The minister of trade said that "this large productivity gap with our main competitors goes to the heart of Britain's legacy of economic underperformance."

She added: "From investment to management decisions, and from the competition framework to training, both government and companies have a role to play in boosting UK productivity."

The government identified skills training, and investment, particularly in hi-tech industries, as central to Britain's poor performance.

Japanese economy to shrink 0.3% in '98 — OECD

PARIS (AFP) — Japan is on the edge of recession and its economy is expected to shrink 0.3 per cent this year as a result of domestic problems aggravated by the fall-out from the Asian financial crisis, the OECD has said.

"Japan's economy is on the edge of recession... The already poor economic situation, as well as the existing weakness of the financial system, has been aggravated by the Asia crisis," the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) said in its Economic Outlook report.

There has been "a significant worsening of economic conditions in Japan" since the last report in December, said the head of the OECD's economics department, Ignazio Visco, adding that he was "very concerned about Japanese conditions."

The OECD urged the Japanese government to take a "more comprehensive approach" to economic

reform aimed at "restoring private sector confidence and putting the Japanese economy on a firm footing."

Any reform package would have a greater chance of success "if it were based on permanent tax reductions or on increases in public investment that has a high economic efficiency," the OECD said.

Mr. Visco said that the size of any reform package would be less important than the kind of measures it contained, and that "tax cuts must not only be permanent, but be perceived to be permanent."

The OECD report said the Japanese economy is expected to shrink this year for the first time since 1974, contracting by 0.3 per cent before returning to growth of 1.3 per cent in 1999, after growing 0.9 per cent in 1997.

But it warned that "a resumption of even modest growth in 1999 is predicated on a return of private sector

confidence associated with regulatory reforms and a successful conclusion to the twin crises in the banking system and in the rest of Asia."

"The challenge facing policy-makers is enormous," the report said.

The government needs to take "clear action in the banking sector" to ensure that long-standing problem of non-performing loans is resolved once and for all.

At the same time, it needs to undertake "rapid easing of the regulatory burden and as stimulative a macroeconomic policy stance as feasible."

But it cannot lower interest rates as they are already at record lows, and the 1998 budget does not seem likely to be enough in terms of fiscal stimulus to give the economy the chance to turn around.

"Downside risks are both several and serious," the OECD said.

"Further bankruptcies in the banking and brokerage sectors could be joined by renewed failures in the equally beleaguered insurance sector," the report added.

At the same time, Japan is at risk from any further deterioration in the rest of Asia "given Japanese banks' exposure in the region," the report said.

"Overall it is unclear what it will take for private sector

sentiment to improve sufficiently for discretionary spending to improve," the OECD noted.

Japan will still have a problem with a high current account surplus this year despite the negative growth, as falling exports to its neighbours due to the Asian crisis will be more than offset by a fall in domestic demand, and thus imports, due to the troubles at home, the OECD said.

Unemployment is seen rising to 3.5 per cent this year and 3.6 per cent in 1999 from 3.4 per cent in 1997 and there is an "underlying weakness in the labour market," the report said.

The economic slowdown will cut inflation to 0.5 per cent this year from 0.6 per cent in 1997, with prices expected to hold steady in 1999.

Meanwhile, an official of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said the worst is over in the Asian financial crisis, but warned of troubles ahead if Japan fails to revive its economy.

"There are still possible shocks" threatening the fragile Asian economies, said Stanley Fischer, first deputy managing director of the IMF. "One of those shocks is the decline of the Japanese economy."

Tokyo has been criticised recently for not doing more to

bail out the rest of Asia by rejuvenating its stagnant economy and increasing imports.

Japan's economy, which alone accounts for some 80 per cent of the goods and services produced in the entire region, has languished ever since its over-inflated property market collapsed in 1992.

Mr. Fischer said larger and more stable economies like the United States probably won't see much damage from Japan's economic malaise.

"It's significant for its near neighbours," he said. "But it's not a factor that will cause a world economic crisis."

Mr. Fischer said the best thing Japan can do is clean up once and for all the mess left by the real estate market's collapse: Bad loans that still remain on the books of Japanese banks. These loans total 76 trillion yen (\$571 billion), according to official estimates.

"One of the lessons of the crisis (in Asia) is that if you don't deal with financial sector problems, they don't go away. They get worse," he said.

Reviving its financial system will also require Japan to make some bold structural reforms, Mr. Fischer said.

He called for Japan to increase "transparency" by disclosing to investors more information about the health of companies. Japanese companies are now often criticised for hiding problems from their own shareholders. Japan must give its financial watchdog agencies more power to enforce disclosure requirements and protect small investors, he said.



HALKIRK INTERNATIONAL, one of Europe's leading marketing companies in the Holiday ownership and Travel business, is proud to announce the commencement of its operation in conjunction with Le Meridien Hotel in Amman in June 1998. The directors, Messrs Eric Smith and Charles Mackenzie, have been in the holiday business for over 20 years and for the past 10 years one of the main consultancies with First National Bank PLC.

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HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR MONDAY, MAY 25, 1998

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) If you're not involved in some educational project, you should be. There are certainly a few things that hold your interest. Although it's disruptive now, these new skills will be very helpful later. Give them as much time as you can, while still getting your regular job done.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You'll be tempted to spend more than you can afford, but you'll have to get used to that. It's going to be in effect most of this month. A friend can help by reminding you how much you have already. The more satisfied you are with what you've got, the less compelled you'll feel to get more.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You have to prepare yourself for an opportunity. Remember that old parable about putting the seeds on fertile ground? Well, you need to get your personal ground fertilised first, so that when the opportunity shows up, you can act on it quickly.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) People will be bugging you to do things you thought had already been done. Don't get frustrated. Instead, figure out how to get what you want, even if it feels like you're going through a maze. If you keep that objective firmly in mind, it'll be a lot easier.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Your group has a lot of energy, enthusiasm and creativity. No problem! You're good at that, and this situation should bring out the very best of your leadership qualities.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) There are all sorts of opportunities opening up, but some of them are a little stressful. You have to try things you haven't done before. You may also have to face some of your own worst fears. Might as well give it a try. It'll get easier with practice.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You're encouraged to step outside your old limits. You may even want to sign up for a class. If so, consider a new language. That's your best skill, and one of your favourite weapons. If you've already mastered your own, try somebody else's. You'll multiply the opportunities available to you.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) A friend of yours is in a ditch. You are a big help at times like this by providing much-needed stability. This person is having trouble figuring out what to do next. It's probably obvious to you, so go ahead and point it out. Gently, of course.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Conditions are just right for an argument. This may not be a bad thing at all. It looks like the discussion starts at work and carries over into the evening. Between the two of you, you might actually find solutions to the world's problems. Why not? Somebody's got to do it.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You feel chilly and warm and loved. This could make you late for work this morning if you're not careful. Actually, there's going to be quite a lot of work today, and things won't slow down just because it's quitting time. You may have to work over.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You're in the mood to make a romantic commitment, or you're confronting one that's already been made. Either way, it's a snugly morning. You may have a hard time getting to work. Call in well, if you can get away with it. There's no way you could call in sick. You're feeling too good.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Something's going on in the next few days to disrupt your home. It could be roommates shifting around; it could be that you're moving, or rearranging furniture. At any rate, you have a little time left to prepare before you get into the actual project. Use that time wisely.

Birthstone of May: Emerald — Citrine

THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



"At work they give us doughnuts and coffee. Bread and water would be too obvious."

JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

ALTEM

POKAK

NURULC

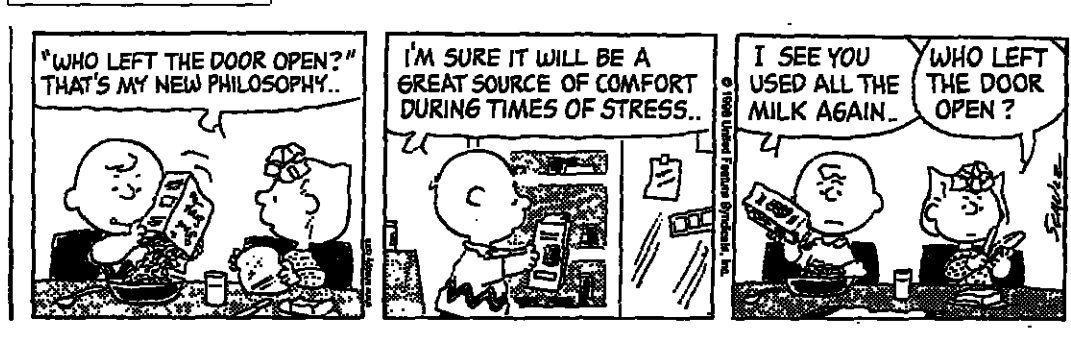
INJEYT

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here: _____

Yesterday's Jumbles: LIVEN ANISE CRAFTY NEWEST Answer: What the ladies considered the quilting bee — A "SEW-CIAL" EVENT

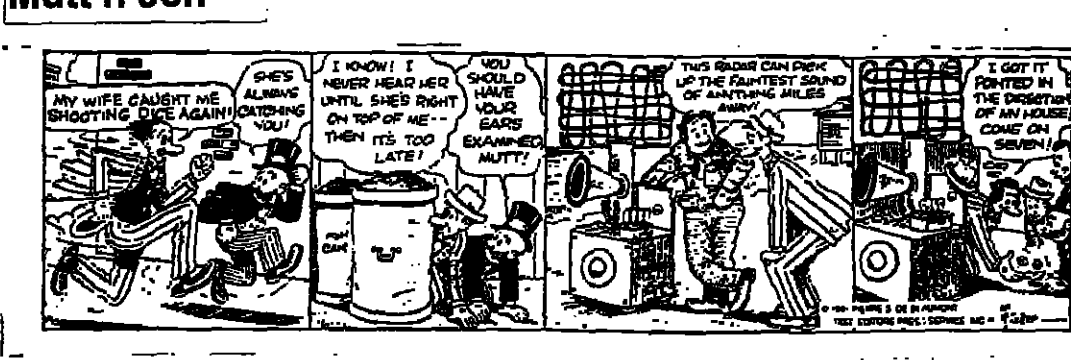
Peanuts



Andy Capp



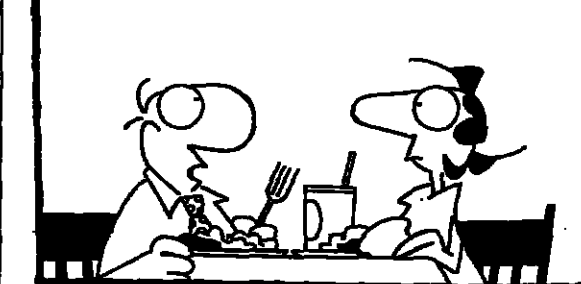
Mutt'n'Jeff



THE Daily Crossword

Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

TMSPuzzles@aol.com



By Tom Price Chicago, IL 5/23/98

ACROSS

1 Knitted shoes

8 Jag the edge of

15 San ... CA

16 Spills apart or sticks together

17 "Picnic" co-star

19 Wine baths?

20 Key-punch bus

23 Showed up

27 Heinsley and others

31 Unsaturated alcohol

32 Proposed a figure

36 ... mas, anant

37 1979 U.S. Open finalist — "You

41 Longing

42 Contradictions

43 Toyota model

47 Meadowsweet

48 Subjective writers

52 Choice abbr.

53 Self-contained universes

57 Land bridge from Russia to Finland

63 Carat

64 Keeps

65 Portuguese nobleman

66 More squalid

DOWN

1 Cake of soap

2 John Lennon's Yoko

3 Forerunner of the CIA

4 United force

5 Ms. Fitzgerald

6 Abu Dhabi

7 boom

8 Get outta here!

9 Ducks and dodges

10 Change place cards

11 Fight, country-style

12 "Maria"

13 ... Aviv

14 Class for new US immigrants

18 Genetic letters

20 Raise

21 Aspirations

22 Artisans in clay

24 Noted speakers

25 Oscar contender

26 Of the tongue

28 "Boyz n the Hood" co-star

29 Long

30 Drop

33 Pinchle king-topper

34 Afore

35 Made a ditch

38 ... Cruces, NM

39 Grip of

40 Sumpas, Agassi, etc.

44 Sundry three

46 Lurch and swerve

45 What one winks

46 Intercede

49 Rooster's stone

50 Malleable metal

51 Mixes

54 Oh, yeah

55 Back of the kitchen?

56 Clupeid fish

57 Quantity of beer

58 Month of showers: abbr.

59 Stephen "The Crying Game"

60 Di times II

61 French one

62 Former Sov. element

Daily

A review of

Jordan Pipes distributing divid

THE JORDAN PIPES Manufacturing Co. has announced a 10% dividend for shareholders. The company, which is a public company, has a long history of success and is a leading manufacturer of pipes and fittings in the Middle East. The dividend is a reflection of the company's strong financial performance and its commitment to its shareholders.

Provisions for drop Jordan Internat

JOHN DEERE has announced a 10% dividend for shareholders. The company, which is a public company, has a long history of success and is a leading manufacturer of agricultural machinery in the United States. The dividend is a reflection of the company's strong financial performance and its commitment to its shareholders.

REUTERS The Business

Major Currencies & Com

Currency	USD	DEM	YEN
US Dollar	1.0000	1.7888	149.64
DE Mark	0.9688	1.0000	147.56
GB Sterling	1.6309	2.9365	163.26
CH Franc	0.8628	1.2814	140.33
JP Yen	0.0074	1.2947	1.0000
CA Dollar	0.6994	1.2919	80.81
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0148	0.0007
NL Guilder	0.5345	88.71	3.7603
FR Franc	0.1695	0.2081	6.5595

Energy

US Dollar	-	0.7899	2.7
Jordan Dinar	1.4104	-	2.2
Saudi Riyal	0.2656	0.1890	
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8807	1.3
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1948	1.5
Kuwait Dinar	3.2701	2.3158	12.2
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1920	2.8
Lebanese:1000	0.66	0.4696	1.4
Egyptian	0.2936	0.2084	1.1

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Jordan Pipes Manufacturing Company
distributing dividends at a rate of 10 per cent

THE JORDAN Pipes Manufacturing Company generated a JD0.7 million gross profit from sales that amounted to JD5.37 million last year. Sales in the local market totalled JD5.2 million but board chairman Issam Bdeir told the general assembly that the company plans to raise production and focus on export markets.

Noting that sales to outside markets amounted to only JD165,000 in 1997, Mr. Bdeir indicated that the Iraqi market is a promising one after the company's galvanised pipes were included in the Jordanian-Iraqi trade protocol.

Provisions for drop in value of investments drag
Jordan International Trading Centre to loss

DESPITE BOOSTING sales from JD2.6 million in 1996 to JD4.9 million in 1997, the Jordan International Trading Centre posted a JD236,300 loss compared to a JD662,300 profit registered in 1996. According to the annual report, the gross profit amounted to JD397,555 (JD194,590 in 1996) and the net profit stood at JD280,000 (JD136,000 in 1996).

The loss was due to necessary provisions that were taken to consolidate the allocations for doubtful assets and to cover the gap between the cost and the market value of the firm's investments. The difference was calculated to be around JD0.5 million.

Board Chairman Mousa Shehadeh told the general assembly that the higher sales were achieved despite the continuation of difficult economic conditions that affected the general demand in the markets. He said

According to the annual report, the company's production increased by 11.4 per cent from 9,850 tonnes in 1996 to around 11,000 tonnes in 1997. Total assets were up from JD8.77 million to JD9.74 million and shareholders equity stood at JD6.5 million at the end of last year.

The general assembly endorsed the company's 1997 financial statement and authorised the distribution of JD325,000 in dividends out of JD401,500 recorded as net profit. The dividends represent 10 per cent of the nominal value of the share (Al Arab Al Yawm + Al Dustour).

Mr. Shehadeh said the unstable economic and political conditions prevailing in the region were and will continue to have a major effect on the national economy. But, he added, the firm will persist to strengthen and expand its activities.

The total assets of the Jordan International Trading Centre at the end of 1997 amounted to JD4.9 million (JD5.1 million at the end of 1996). Of the total, JD3.9 million (JD3.4 million) were current assets. The firm's shareholder's equity stood at around JD3.4 million at the end of last year (Al Aswaq + Al Ra'i + Al Dustour).

Saudis borrow \$400m
for chemical venture

RIYADH (AFP) — Saudi Arabia has borrowed \$400 million from a consortium of regional banks to finance a petrochemical project as part of ongoing plans to expand this sector, project owners said.

Ben Zahr, controlled by the giant Saudi Arabia Basic Industries Corp. (SABIC), signed the loan to fund the project which will nearly double its production of polypropylene to 640,000 tonnes a year, SABIC said.

The contract for the company's second polypropylene plant in Jubail industrial area was awarded recently to the U.S. company Parsons International and the Saudi Arabian Parsons Ltd.

Production of polypropylene, used in the car, appliance, textile and packaging industries, will start in the second quarter of 2000.

The Riyadh Bank led the arrangers of the loan from the consortium, which includes the Arab National Bank, the Saudi British Bank, the

United Saudi Commercial Bank, the Gulf Investment Bank, Emirates Bank International, Bank of Bahrain, and the London-based Kuwait and Saudi International Bank.

"SABIC has increasingly resorted to borrowing from the financial market to fund its new projects," SABIC's vice chairman and managing director Ibrahim Ben Salamah said after the signing in Riyadh. SABIC, one of the biggest petrochemical firms, controls 70 per cent of Ben Zahr (the Saudi European Petrochemical Company).

The remaining stake is held in equal shares by Neste Oy of Finland, Ecocel of Italy and the Damman-based Arab Petroleum Investment Corp.

The Saudi government owns 70 per cent of SABIC, which plans to boost its output of petrochemicals, metals and petroleum products to nearly 28 million tonnes by 2000 from around 23 million tonnes currently.

Sandy Weill tops list
of best-paid CEOs

NEW YORK (AP) — There are those who want to be like Michael Jordan, but after considering some executive salaries some folks might want to be more like Sandy.

According to Forbes magazine, Sanford I. Weill, the chief executive of the Travelers Group and future co-chairman of Citigroup, made almost \$228 million in 1997. That's nearly three times what Forbes said Jordan of the Chicago Bulls made last year, by comparison a paltry \$78 million.

Mr. Weill, as recorded in Forbes' May 18 issue, tops a list of last year's 800 best-paid American CEOs, based upon salary, bonus, gains from exercising options and other remuneration.

Mr. Jordan would have been No. 5 if he were a CEO (chief executive officer) instead of a one-man product-endorsement and

restaurant franchise. But Mr. Weill is topped in other categories. For instance, filmmaker Stephen Spielberg made about \$283 million last year, putting him at the apex of Forbes Top 40.

Somewhat, Bill Gates and Warren Buffett didn't make the list but they remained the No. 1 and No. 2 wealthiest Americans by owning stock with Mr. Gates' holdings appreciating by \$22 billion last year. Microsoft's CEO had stock worth \$49.50 billion — and a paycheck of \$2.5 million — while Berkshire Hathaway's Buffett owned stock worth \$36.55 billion and was paid \$500,000.

By comparison, there are only two billionaires within the top 25 on the list.

As Forbes said in the magazine: "In a capitalist society, the biggest rewards go to capitalists, not to man-

agers."

The Top 10 list, according to Forbes:

- 1) Sanford I. Weill, Travelers Group, \$227.6 million.
- 2) Stephen C. Hibelbert, Conoco, \$124.6 million.
- 3) Richard M. Scrushy, HealthSouth, \$106.8 million.
- 4) Ray R. Irani, Occidental Petroleum, \$104.5 million.
- 5) Lawrence A. Bossidy, Allied Signal, \$57.5 million.
- 6) Andrew S. Grove, Intel, \$52.6 million.
- 7) Charles W. McCall, HBO and Co., \$52.1 million.
- 8) Robert B. Shapiro, Monsanto, \$51.8 million.
- 9) Philip J. Purcell, Morgan Stanley, Dean Witter and Co., \$47.7 million.
- 10) Henry R. Silverman, Cendant, \$44.1 million.

Foreign car manufacturers gear up to take on China market

BEIJING (AFP) — Major foreign car manufacturers are preparing to launch new models in a bid to boost their share of the Chinese market, the China Daily Business Weekly said on Sunday.

Volkswagen, Honda, General Motors and Citroen are set for new launches to boost their current market share, while others are looking to open new projects to maintain a presence, the

English-language newspaper said.

Shanghai Volkswagen, a 50-50 joint venture between Shanghai Automotive Industry Corp. (SAIC) and Germany's Volkswagen is to

launch the Passat B5, a model tailored for the Chinese market which will be added to the popular Santana range, it said.

It is likely to face stiff competition from the Accord

which is to be built by a joint venture involving Japan's Honda, which, the newspaper said, has taken over the debt-ridden Guangzhou Peugeot Automotive Co. in return for paying \$100 million owed by the failed company.

Volkswagen has a second card to play with the Audi C5 to be launched by its second joint venture FAW-Volkswagen, in which First Automotive Works (FAW) owns 60 per cent equity, the newspaper said.

Other bids to join the market include a \$1.57-billion joint venture between SAIC and U.S. giant General Motors which will launch the Buick GL in April 1999, while the Dong Feng Citroen Automotive Corp. is set to launch a five-door car late this year to extend its Fukang hatchback family.

The Wuhan-based Sino-French joint venture hopes to develop two models simultaneously around 2000, having recently gained an 850-million-franc (\$137 million) credit from the French government and 500 million yuan (\$60 million) from China, the paper said.

Toyota has set up an engine plant in Tianjin and is negotiating with the Tianjin Automotive Industry Corp. to introduce the Corolla to upgrade its Xiali model.

Other foreign firms, unable to set up complete new car and engine projects after the central government stopped approving them last year, are looking at setting up engine plants to maintain a presence in China.

The move by the Beijing government also forced domestic auto makers to look for deals with foreign firms in the form of "technical renovation" projects, the weekly said.

Japan's Mitsubishi took advantage of this to sign two engine joint-venture agreements last year with a subsidiary of Aviation Industries of China in Harbin and a firm operating under the umbrella of the China National Aerospace Corp.

Both Fiat Auto of Italy and France's Renault are also eyeing the market potential and looking for local partners to help produce their own models, it said.

REUTERS REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	1.7688	0.6133	1.4645	135.81	1.4506	1734.30	1.9822	5.8986	
DE Mark	0.5686	1.0000	0.3484	0.8327	77.20	0.6245	985.79	1.1270	3.3533
GB Sterling	1.6305	2.8685	1.0000	2.3879	221.48	2.3652	2827.78	3.2320	9.5177
CH Franc	0.6828	120.01	0.4182	1.0000	92.69	0.9898	1183.42	135.26	4.0280
JP Yen	0.0074	1.2947	0.0074	1.0000	1.0000	1.0078	127.27	145.91	4.3423
CA Dollar	0.6894	1.2916	0.4228	1.0698	1.07	1.0708	1.4591	4.3265	
IT Lira	0.0005	1.0140	0.3534	0.8844	1278.45	0.8363	11.43	3.4008	
NL Guilder	0.5045	88.71	0.3091	73.88	68.47	0.7316	874.72	2.9780	
FR Franc	0.1695	0.2881	0.1039	24.8237	23.00	0.2459	33.00	33.0000	

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar	1.0000	0.7090	3.7500	0.3770	3.6398	3.6728	1.0000	1513.00	3.4025
Jordan Dinar	1.4104	1.0000	5.2898	0.5317	5.1337	0.4313	5.1803	2133.99	4.7950
Saudi Riyal	0.2666	0.1890	1.0000	0.1005	0.97	0.0815	0.98	403.41	0.9072
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8807	9.8488	1.0000	9.84	0.8112	9.74	4013.48	9.0287
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1948	1.0304	1.0304	1.0000	0.0840	1.01	416.88	0.3348
Kuwait Dinar	3.2701	2.3185	12.2646	1.2328	11.99	12.01	12.01	4947.58	0.3348
Emirate Dinar	0.2723	0.1930	1.0212	1.0205	0.9910	0.0833	1.01	411.95	0.3284
Lebanese 1000	0.56	0.4896	2.4788	0.2492	2.4057	0.2021	2.4276	2.2488	
Egyptian	0.2939	0.2084	1.1023	0.1108	1.0697	0.0899	1.0794	444.57	

Energy									
Oil	Last	Revised							
Brent	14.37	14.33							
W. Texas	14.78	14.11							
Bonny	14.37	14.33							
Dubai	12.29	11.94							
UL Gas	145.00	145.00							

Metal Prices									
Metal	Bid	Offer							
Gold (oz's)	299.8	300.4							
Silver (oz's)	5.28	5.32							
Platinum (oz's)	378.7	380.7							
AL (3 Months)	1403	1405							
CU (3 Months)	1693	1696							
Zinc (3 Months)	1072	1075							
Lead (3 Months)	570	573							
NI (3 Months)	4890	4910							

Main Equity Indices									
Bourse	Index	Value	Chng	% Chng	High	Low	Pr Cls		
New York	DOW JONES	9114.44	-17.93	-0.2	9164.38	9077.32	9132.37		
New York	S&P 500	1116.89	-4.17	-0.37	1116.89	1107.99	1114.64		
London	FT-SE 100	8958.5	20	0.24	8957.7	8908.8	8935.5		
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	18801.66	-43.6	-0.23	18915.2	18736.2	18845.3		
Paris	CAC 40	4049.78	1.86	0.05	4079.97	4021.39	4047.92		
Frankfurt	DAX	5564.21	53.23	0.97	5564.56	5506.21	5510.98		

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET

HOUSING BANK CERTIFICATES - SUBSTANTIATED

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ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 24/05/1998

PART	12 MONTHS HIGH	12 MONTHS LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE				
S	355.500	170.000	ARAB BANK	16.8	0.98	81	3220	659665	204.50	205.00	-50+				
S	2.340	1.620	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	13.6	4.19	7	6600	11023	1.71	1.67	-04-				
S	1.340	1.250	BANK OF JORDAN	4.2	0.00	3	210	777	1.32	1.32	-				
S	1.300	0.880	WID. EAST INV. BK.	63.1	0.00	8	7500	275	1.32	1.32	-				
S	2.480	1.600	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	11.3	6.40	2	500	810	1.62	1.62	-				
S	6.110	1.600	THE MIDDLE EAST	18.6	3.41	49	14841	43854	2.94	2.93	-01-				
S	4.180	1.750	JOR. INVEST. BANK	9	0.00	10	7347	7347	1.75	1.75	-				
S	920	590	JOR. GULF BANK	4.1	10.14	6	6650	4589	6.99	6.99	-02+				
S	4.400	1.740	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	19.4	0.00	20	8168	15286	1.87	1.90	-03+				
S	2.350	1.470	JOR. TRV. FIN. BANK/INR	8	0.00	1	900	1395	1.52	1.55	-03+				
S	1.400	800	BEIT AL-HAL (BEITRA)	4.4	0.00	1	600	546	0.90	0.91	-01+				
BANK SECTOR TOTALS											INDEX: 275.65	CHNG: +0.12	189	53152	752148
S	1.350	0.810	ARABIAN SEAS INSUR.	45.6	0.00	3	1625	1348	0.83	0.83	-				
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS											INDEX: 121.80	CHNG: 0.00	3	1625	1348
S	2.240	1.620	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	9.9	5.42	7	782	1888	2.05	2.03	-02-				
S	1.550	0.970	MAZL. PORTFOLIO	41.9	0.00	25	17950	18740	1.07	1.05	-02-				
S	590	330	JORDAN CINTL. TRAD.	9	0.00	15	17800	7588	0.43	0.43	-				
S	1.440	1.020	JOR. TRV. FIN. BANK/INR	8	0.00	1	1000	5550	5.46	5.35	-12-				
S	1.480	1.060	WID. EAST BOTTLERS	6.2	0.00	1	1000	1958	1.08	1.08	-				
S	4.600	2.030	JARAF INT'L. INV. EDUC.	10.7	0.98	12	7550	15173	2.03	2.02	-01-				
S	900	590	JARAF EDUCATOR	16.2	0.00	2	350	806	0.92	0.92	-				
S	1.830	1.450	UNITED CO.	6.7	7.24	7	2500	3800	1.52	1.52	-				
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS											INDEX: 114.81	CHNG: -0.49	70	49982	54743
S	4.450	2.450	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	14.8	4.42	17	12025	29980	2.50	2.49	-01-				
S	7.050	5.100	ARAB POZASH CO.	26.1	3.77	2	100	530	5.35	5.30	-05-				
S	9.270	5.100	JOR. PETROCHEM. REFINERY	10.1	8.56	16	1711	17737	10.35	10.38	03+				
S	2.070	1.200	INDUSTRIAL CHM. INR.	7.2	0.00	2	3600	1000	1.11	1.22	-01-				
S	3.740	3.680	JARAF PHARM. MANF.	14.5	3.82	53	15415	61006	5.33	5.25	-08-				
S	2.440	1.020	JOR. TYPES MANF.	9.8	8.47	4	2825	2979	1.18	1.18	-				
S	6.350	4.800	JOR. ALUMIN. IND.	6.7	6.27	1	500	2790	5.58	5.58	-				
S	2.220	2.220	JARAF ALUM. IND.	17.4	10.64	10	7850	18588	2.45	2.35	-10-				
S	1.110	0.670	JARAF PAPER CONV. TRD.	24.4	0.00	15	17850	14115	0.76	0.80	-04+				
S	510	620	BEITRA TRD.	7	0.00	7	342	7	1.745	0.51	0.51				
S	760	370	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	11	17500	7700	64	44	-				
S	2.020	1.160	UNITV. CHEM. INDS.	11.7	7.02	2	1000	1145	1.16	1.14	-02-				
S	3.000	920	MAZL. CABLE WIRE. INVC.	48.8	0.00	22	24400	25417	1.05	1.04	-01-				
S	730	550	JOR. SULPH. CO.	0.00	0.00	17	8455	8447	0.58	0.58	-				
S	1.560	1.150	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	14.8	4.48	6	1900	2513	1.33	1.34	-01+				
S	1.520	0.810	UNITV. INDO. INDS.	13.7	6.98	4	1800	1548	0.86	0.86	-				
S	1.200	0.660	JOR. RESOURCES	8.6	7.72	14	1300	806	1.00	1.00	-				
S	1.620	1.320	MAZL. CALCIUM	9.6	7.30	2	3000	4110	1.37	1.37	-				
S	1.080	0.810	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	12.1	11.63	2	650	859	0.86	0.86	-				
S	1.290	1.100	EL. & WTR. REPAIR	48.9	0.00	17	1750	2420	1.38	1.39	-01+				
S	1.310	0.800	INTEL. TOWERS	7.9	0.00	17	1750	1750	0.78	0.78	-				
S	860	660	JORDAN STEEL	9.6	8.14	42	42425	36172	0.85	0.85	-01-				
S	1.100	0.590	MID. EAST COMPLEX	10.1	0.00	11	6200	3518	0.37	0.38	-01+				
S	1.100	0.720	JARAF INT. FOOD FACT.	54.9	0.00	1	2000	2000	1.00	1.00	-				
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS											INDEX: 101.77	CHNG: -0.57	282	207125	292022
GRAND TOTAL											INDEX: 180.42	CHNG: -0.11	544	311884	1100261
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 24/05/1998															
S	1.050	0.910	EXPORT & FTR. BEX. 751	17.0	0.00	12	23500	15895	0.93	0.92	-01-				
S	620	490	WALSH. BQP. REINT. WAT.	28.0	0.00	2	1750	378	0.51	0.51	-				
S	530	340	JOR. TRAD. P&I	9	0.00	10	8500	1450	0.45	0.45	-				
S	600	560	UNION INV. 501	9	0.00	5	5080	1220	0.76	0.76	-				
S	620	360	JARAF INV. INVEST.	9	0.00	14	19750	7715	0.40	0.39	-01-				
S	610	410	AL-DAMIR	39.2	0.00	13	45313	29892	0.67	0.67	-				
S	290	110	JOR. INDS. MARSHAL-JENCO	7	0.00	13	1250	3258	0.11	0.11	-				
S	600	370	ARAB FOOD & MED.	9	0.00	15	26850	11905	0.45	0.44	-01-				
S	240	200	JARAF INTL. INV. TRD.	38.0	0.00	17	26100	8616	0.34	0.33	-01-				
S	600	370	MAZL. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	13	400	2636	0.16	0.16	-				
S	650	360	JARAF MOLT. INDS. MANF.	9	0.00	27	60994	24397	0.41	0.34	-01-				
S	690	580	NIGHTMARE PHARM. 901	9	0.00	23	41702	22091	0.62	0.63	-01+				
S	660	580	UNION TOBACCO 87.51	10.3	9.72	9	1250	12146	0.67	1.62	-01-				
S	630	240	INDUS. INVC.	9	0.00	1	250	60	0.27	0.27	-				
S	430	350	ADVANCED PHARM. IND.	10	11.24	12	12452	8018	0.64	0.65	-01+				
S	950	400	MAZL. PETRO. CHEM.	15	0.00	18	1000	2444	0.84	0.95	-01+				
S	1.310	1.000	UNITV. INR.	7	0.00	6	2353	2444	1.04	1.03	-01-				
S	1.000	750	BEITRA PHARM. CO. 751	12.2	9.47	2	450	245	0.79	0.80	-01+				
GRAND TOTAL											190	333918	161741		

+ Saw 12 months low

+ Stock dividend during the past 12 months

+ Listed during the past 12 months

P = P/E ratio is 100 or more

E = Negative P/E

+ Earning is zero or N/A for the most recent year

France's Jacquet predicts World Cup success

PARIS (AFP) — French national coach Aime Jacquet has said he will resign following France's World Cup victory on home soil this summer in bold words of confidence. Jacquet, who took France to a penalty shootout loss by the Czech Republic in the Euro 96 semi-finals, said the World Cup finals would be his final bow on the sporting stage. "My sporting life is not over, but it will be on July 13," Jacquet said. "It will be perfect as I will have taken a lap of honour with the French team the night before at the Stade de France." The 57-year-old Jacquet, who took over from Gerard Houllier when France failed to qualify for the 1994 World Cup finals after Bulgaria beat them in the last minute of their final qualifier, said only his closest friends were aware of the date he would retire. "However I did make it clear to the president of the French football federation when I took the job that I would lead France to World Cup glory and bow out after that," Jacquet said.

Jacquet has played for Lyon and St Etienne in the French league but even he admits he was a modest performer rather than an excep-



French national soccer team coach Aime Jacquet prepares to conduct a training session at Clairfontaine, southern Paris, after announcing the 22 players for the French World Cup squad. The World Cup finals kick off on June 10 (Reuters photo)

tional player.

He coached at Lyon, Bordeaux and Montpellier before being appointed as French coach in January 1994. One of Jacquet's major worries is the scoring of goals. Though he has players in some of the greatest clubs in the world, the total of his attacking squad has not always been as impressive as the sum of its parts.

Juventus' Zinedine Zidane and Inter Milan's Youni Djorkaeff are arguably two of the world's best attacking midfielders. But the centre forward role is still unfilled by a world class performer. Auxerre's Stephane Guivarch scored on his debut against South Africa last October and scored 22 goals on loan at Rennes last season. And Monaco's 18-year-old David Trezeguet, who was called up for the first time earlier this year, is another possibility, along with Maurice Florin, Thierry Henry, and Robert Pires. A world class performer who consistently puts the ball in the back of the net could be the difference between Jacquet's World Cup winning prediction becoming true and a mediocre performance.

Benni takes Africa by storm

PARIS (AFP) — The rise of Benni McCarthy from South African second division footballer to African sporting celebrity reads more like fiction than fact.

When he starred at the 1997 African youth championships, Dutch club Ajax swooped and took the tall, thin striker most South Africans had never heard of to Europe in a \$1 million deal.

Although first-team appearances for the Amsterdam club have mainly been as a second-half substitute, Benni began a recent match and scored a hat-trick.

Largely ignored by previous South Africa coach Clive Barker, who questioned his loyalty to Bafana Bafana (The Boys), Cape Town-born McCarthy was given his big break when Jomo Sono took temporary charge this year.

Unlucky not to find the net during a shock regional championship loss in Namibia, Benni exacted full revenge by scoring four times within 13 minutes against the same opposition in the African Nations Cup.

He finished the tournament as joint leading scorer with Egyptian veteran Hossam Hassan on seven goals and was voted the outstanding player of the 16-nation event.

Warned by national coach Philippe Troussier to keep his feet on the ground, the 20-year-old responded with a series of goals for the Dutch champions.

A fan of Brazilian superstar Ronaldo and Liberian George Weah, Benni admits he misses his parents and South African food, but loves the choice of clothes and CDs in Amsterdam.

World Cup countdown with Franz Beckenbauer

Are you a World Cup expert? Then let me challenge you

What's wrong here?



9) France's national team, shown here in a June 1997 photo, faces a great challenge playing in a World Cup at home again, the first time being sixty years ago. It is a great opportunity to win, for the first time ever, the world title and join in the elite circle of World Cup Champions, which at present numbers only six teams: Brazil, Germany, Argentina, England, Italy and Uruguay. Up to now the best results France has managed were runners-up once and two third places. In their only "home" World Cup to date, France did not get past the quarter finals.

Solve the country contest daily to find the phrase at the end of Beckenbauer's World Cup countdown

9) The capital city is located on a river which once gave its name to a fallen monarchy. The appearance of the country today is very different to what it was a few years ago. Two regions currently form a "Federation Republic" after four others broke away and declared themselves independent, which led to war, destruction and mass exodus and shrank the total area of the country by a half. In the last few months another conflict of nationalities in the extreme south has threatened to embroil the country in a fresh military flare-up. In the first four decades after World War Two, it was held up as a positive example of a functioning multi-ethnic society, led by its "anchor," a legendary partisan leader. However, the country, which had ruled unopposed from 1945 until his death in 1980, erupted under the strain of suppressed ethnic and national differences. The population also suffered international trade sanctions which were lifted in 1996 after the conclusion of peace. Solution:

The phrase we are looking for offers a rather precise, though harsh definition of an ability considered indispensable in the world of diplomats.

Please fill in the respective letters in the corresponding positions:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24
25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36
37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48
49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60
61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74

Please enter the letters of the country as instructed in the solution squares follows:

First letter of the country in position 9
Fourth letter in position 57
Tenth letter in position 41

Facts and figures about the participating countries

CROATIA
56,610 sq km Capital: Zagreb
Population: 4,777,000 — 84.4 per sq km (1994)
Principal language: Croat
Annual GNP per capita: US\$ 2,530 — (1994)
Participation in World Cup championships:

DENMARK
43,094 sq km Capital: Copenhagen
Population: 5,251,027 — 121.9 per sq km (1996)
Principal language: Danish
Annual GNP per capita: US\$ 28,110 — (1994)
Participation in World Cup championships:

ANSWERS

CHALLENGE QUIZ
8) Oleg Salenko of Russia, in the game against Cameroon (6-1).
COUNTRY CONTEST
8) Austria
PHOTO CONTEST
7) The mistake is in the caption and this time there are two: Paolo is the son of nephew of Cesare Maldini, he is his son.

Also Cesare did not succeed Fabio Capello, he succeeded Arrigo Sacchi.
8) The photo is wrong. Brazil traditionally play in plain, not black and white striped stockings. Their shorts are blue, not white, and their shirts are yellow with green edging, with the emblem of the Brazilian Football Confederation, which is also missing in the photo.

England booed off in Wembley stalemate

LONDON (AFP) — England were booed off the pitch after they were held to a goalless draw by Saudi Arabia in their final warm-up game at Wembley before next month's World Cup finals on Saturday.

England, ranked fifth in the world and one of the favourites for France '98, looked anything but world beaters as they struggled to break down their under-rated visitors.

Glenn Hoddle's team enjoyed the vast majority of possession but they looked uncertain at the back and were let down by poor passing in the midfield and some woeful finishing in attack.

Hoddle, who now takes his squad to Casablanca for friendlies against Morocco and Belgium next week, admitted: "We had chances to have buried them. If you

don't take them you don't win.

"A win would have been better for us but it didn't pan out for us. But remember this wasn't for anything today. It is a bit disappointing that things didn't work out."

Saudi Arabia coach Carlos Pereira claimed the result was a massive boost for his side ahead of the World Cup.

"It is a very big result to get a draw against the English team at Wembley," Pereira said.

"It is a very big achievement. We still have two games left and it was a good contest. We had chances and I told my players to go out and enjoy the game. Let's play the ball and they did it."

Hoddle admitted England lacked a killing edge in front of goal after watching

his side squander a host of chances.

"Gascoigne did some good things when he came on. He put them on the back foot. He put a suntan in and he will be better for it."

"I don't think they had so many chances. They are in the World Cup, they are a good side and will give some teams trouble in France."

Asked if the final two friendlies are more important than the build-up games so far, Hoddle replied: "The last games are no more crucial than any others. Tunisia is the most crucial game."

Manchester United's Paul Scholes went close for England on 12 minutes when he was let in by Teddy Sheringham but his fierce shot was well saved by Al Daye in the Saudi goal.

England almost took the lead through the unlikely

source of Gareth Southgate who slid on to a superb cross from Alan Shearer only to see his shot blocked by Al Daye.

United striker Sheringham should have scored when he was sent clear on goal by Shearer only to fire his shot straight at the 'keeper.

The Saudis rode their luck but they showed a neat touch on the ball and might have scored when Al-Owairan squirted "a" shot inches wide of David Seaman's goal.

The frustrated Wembley crowd began to call for Paul Gascoigne to be introduced and their calls were answered when Hoddle sent on the Middlesbrough midfielder for Beckham, with Ian Wright coming in for Sheringham in a double substitution on 60 minutes.

Swimming federation awaits go-ahead for Olympic-size pool; sets JD500,000 budget for upcoming year

By Roufan Nahhas
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Jordan Swimming Federation announced that JD500,000 is needed to prepare for the Pan Arab Games which will take place in Amman in 1999.

"We need a substantial amount of money to best prepare ourselves for the event and the future," JSF vice-president Jacqueline Khouri told the Jordan Times.

"Training camps, coaches, travel expenses, and the new Olympic-size swimming pool are among the things the team needs," she added referring to the federation's planned budget for their teams' upcoming training schedules.

However, the JSF still awaits a final word from the Prime Ministry to forge ahead with plans to build a swimming pool to accommodate all the federation's national and international activities, according to JSF Secretary Talal Nasser.

"The main facility needed is to have a modern pool with electronic timing machines which will be under the disposal of the federation and the swimmers," he said.

"We hope that the pool will be ready for use at the Pan Arab Games, but time is running fast." "If plans do not come through, then we have to use Al Hussein Youth City and Al Orthodox Club's pools," Nasser added.

The JSF hopes that the new swimming pool

would attract many new athletes to the sport and maintain a permanent facility for training and competition.

"There are many athletes with a talent to swim and who cannot afford to join a club," he said. "We can give them the opportunity to surface and show their capabilities."

Nasser said the lack of financial and technical capabilities is impeding the Jordan's ability to compete on an international level.

"We have the solid material comprising of dedicated swimmers who need the opportunity to improve themselves," he added.

The JD10,000 the JSF receives annually from the Ministry of Culture and Youth is not enough to cover all the federation's activities and expenses, according to Nasser.

"This money is allocated in three instalments yearly, but it is barely adequate," he said. "That's why we have to depend on donations and contributions, which is getting harder and harder to get these days."

According to Khouri, the JSF envisages a plan for the Pan-Arab Games and future events, which will mainly concentrate on having an experienced international head coach.

"We are trying to recruit a head coach who will help the two coaches Mustafa Hameed and Ali Nawas who currently train the team," she said.

The swimming team consists of several swimmers aged 16-20 who are considered the best in

the Kingdom.

Hana Majaj, Rania Ghosheh, Faris Nasser, Andre Khouri have to challenge older swimmers in the competition.

An effective plan with the right support and dedication can make miracles.

"With training camps here and abroad, we hope to improve and be ready for the big event," Nasser said.

The team plans serious training six days a week, twice daily starting June 10th. Jordan's participation in the last Pan-Arab Games in Beirut brought them one bronze medal.

Majaj was able to take third place with a time of 2:32m in the 200m butterfly and Ghosheh took fifth place with 1:14m in the 100 backstroke — just one second behind third and fourth places.

Ghosheh and Majaj also took part in the World Swimming Championship in Australia earlier this year in a move that was described by JSF as an "incentive for their performance and dedication."

Jordan has no record of swimming successes at the Olympics.

This is the first of a series of features previewing the Kingdom's sports federations and their plans for the 9th Pan-Arab Games which will be held in Amman in 1999.

TODAY AT	PHILADELPHIA '1' Bruce Willis & Richard Gere ... in THE JACKAL Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	PHILADELPHIA '2' Jim Carry ... in LIAR-LIAR Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	PLAZA The biggest cinema production TITANIC Shows: 12:00, 3:30, 7:00, 10:30 p.m.	CONCORD CONCORD '1' THE RELIC Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 CONCORD '2' ISMAILIA RAYEH GAI KAMANANA Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	GALLERIA 2 ABDOUN Antonio Banderas ... in TWO MUCH	GALLERIA 1 ABDOUN DOWN PERISCOPE & still showing at 8:30 p.m. TITANIC	Hisham Yanes Theatre TEL: 4625155 STARTING APRIL 6TH Don't Laugh Please We're Jordanian Starring Hisham Yanes, Amal Dabbas, Rania Kurdi and the group at 8:30 p.m. For reservations call: 4640195, 4625155
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French Open

Spaniards can drown out Latin American beat

PARIS (AFP) — Forget Marcelo Rios. Forget "Guga" Kuerten. This year, the Spanish Armada returns to Roland Garros stronger than ever and they have the French Open title in their sights as they bid to drown out the Latin American beat.

With five players in the top 20, Spain expects to see one of its array of clay court specialists crowned at the French Open as they bid to go one better than last year, when Sergi Bruguera lost out in the final to Kuerten.

Carlos Moya's triumph in the Monte Carlo Open and Hamburg winner and Rome finalist Albert Costa are seen as the razor-sharp form as the Armada's massed ranks sets sail once again.

Much will depend on how World No. 3 Rios can keep his temper under control in Paris, where he admits that "I don't like the French people," and to what extent Kuerten can rise to the occasion and show that last year's straight sets demolition of Bruguera was not a one-off.

"I think I have a reasonable chance to win again, as long as I am confident any day I can find my best form over

French Open Men's Champions

By The Associated Press

1925 — Rene Lacoste
1926 — Henri Cochet
1927 — Rene Lacoste
1928 — Henri Cochet
1929 — Rene Lacoste
1930 — Henri Cochet
1931 — Jean Borotra
1932 — Henri Cochet
1933 — Jack Crawford
1934 — Gottfried von Cramm
1935 — Fred Perry
1936 — Gottfried von Cramm
1937 — Hennes Henkel
1938 — Don Budge
1939 — Don McNeill
1940-45 — No tournament.
World War II
1946 — Marcel Bernard
1947 — Jozsef Asbath
1948 — Frank Parker
1949 — Frank Parker
1950 — Budge Patty
1951 — Jaroslav Drobny
1952 — Jaroslav Drobny
1953 — Ken Rosewall
1954 — Tony Trabert
1955 — Tony Trabert
1956 — Lew Hoad
1957 — Sven Davidson
1958 — Mervyn Rose
1959 — Nicola Pietrangeli
1960 — Nicola Pietrangeli
1961 — Manuel Santana
1962 — Rod Laver
1963 — Roy Emerson

French Open Women's Champions

By The Associated Press

1925 — Suzanne Lenglen
1926 — Suzanne Lenglen
1927 — Kaa Bouman
1928 — Helen Wills
1929 — Helen Wills
1930 — Helen Wills Moody
1931 — Cilly Aussem
1932 — Helen Wills Moody
1933 — Margaret Scriven
1934 — Margaret Scriven
1935 — Hilda K. Sperling
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1937 — Hilda K. Sperling
1938 — Simone P. Mathieu
1939 — Simone P. Mathieu
1940-45 — No tournament.
World War II
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1947 — Pat Canning Todd
1948 — Nelly A. Landry
1949 — Margaret O. duPont
1950 — Doris Hart
1951 — Shirley Fry
1952 — Doris Hart
1953 — Maureen Connolly
1954 — Maureen Connolly
1955 — Angela Mortimer
1956 — Althea Gibson
1957 — Shirley Bloomer
1958 — Suzi Kormoczi
1959 — Christine Truman
1960 — Darlene Hard
1961 — Ann Haydon
1962 — Margaret Smith
1963 — Lesley Turner

NOTE: Prior to 1925, the French Open was restricted to French players.

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Carlos Moya

the fortnight. But of course that's tough," admitted Kuerten, who has successfully managed to stay in the top ten since his unexpected French triumph. The Spaniard has thrown down the gauntlet, however, and allied to skill, they have safety in numbers.

Although Bruguera is the man with experience on his side, having won back-to-back French titles in 1993 and 1994, recent form suggests he is unlikely to head the Spanish challenge this time.

At the end of last season, injury forced him to miss the \$3.3 million ATP Tour World Championship and blisters forced a first-round withdrawal at the Australian Open.

And Bruguera has continued to struggle, his fine 31 wins against eight defeats record at Roland Garros missing the fact that he is having a nightmare season. His record so far was a final berth at the French Open.

Just not happening at the moment — but which is special to me — you never can rule any-

thing out," says Bruguera cautiously.

But that doesn't have to be bad news for Spanish tennis as a whole, because, with Gustavo Kuerten having robbed them of the trophy 12 months ago, their appetite for success is all the greater.

Spain currently have no fewer than 17 players in the top 100, compared with just 12 a year ago, though their top man is 12th-ranked Moya.

Yet their brilliance on clay has still not borne as much fruit as might have been expected.

Bruguera's 1993 five-set win over Jim Courier made him the first Spanish French Open winner since Andres Gimeno, who won in 1972 aged 34.

Before Gimeno, only Manuel Santana, in 1961 and 1964, had tasted victory on Paris' distinctive red clay.

Hence the pressure to deliver on the shoulders of Moya, Costa and company.

Moya's Monte Carlo triumph over Frenchman Cedric Pioline was the first

time he had really shown his form since his final defeat by Pete Sampras in the 1997 Australian Open final. Over the course of the year he got to No. 5 on the back of six final appearances, but slid back after his early Aussie exit this year to home talent Richard Fromberg.

But the Spanish can afford to have the occasional off-day if someone else is on form and such has been the story of this season when Moya has blown hot and then cold again.

He lost both the Barcelona and Estoril semis to world number 16 Alberto Berasategui, who won the Estoril title against former King of Clay Thomas Muster but lost to Todd Martin at Barcelona, also his conqueror at Key Biscayne.

But Berasategui remains a nearly man, having lost to Bruguera in the 1994 French Open final before going out injured in the first round 12 months ago.

He also lost to Hamburg title winner Costa in the Rome semis earlier this month. There, Costa, having

picked up the Spanish baton, promptly dropped it as he forfeited the final with a wrist injury against Chilean Marcelo Rios.

Yet even if Moya, Costa, Bruguera and Berasategui all fail to deliver, the Spanish clay court monster, like the Hydra of classic legend, will still be far from slain, as the likes of Alex Corretja lurk behind them.

Corretja ranks as a first-string member of the Armada, and had last year worked his way up to be Spanish number one before slipping back behind Moya and Costa to 14th on the ATP computer.

Though yet to reach the quarter-finals at Roland Garros, the 24-year-old won his first title at Buenos Aires in 1994. He won three titles last year and beat yet another Spaniard in Felix Mantilla in the Dubai final.

But he struck unlucky in having to retire in the

15th on the computer, and before his defeat to Corretja, showed his powers of stamina and determination when he came back from 1-5 down in the final set to oust Berasategui.

The list of potential Spanish winners does not stop there.

The 65th-ranked Albert Portas, who beat Moya in the second-round at Roland Garros last year only to fall to Belgian Filip Dewulf in a five-setter, is capable of causing more major upsets.

So too is Francisco Claver, who ousted Michael Chang in Hamburg and who twice reached the fourth-round in Paris.

And nobody should rule out the World No. 41, who reached last year's Kitzbuhel final in only his third Tour event.

The up-and-coming Barcelona-based 21-year-



Iva Majoli

Hamburg final to gift Costa victory after an exhaustive passage to the final.

He came close to glory in Key Biscayne, but Andre Agassi ended his dreams in the semis, having already ousted Costa.

Mantilla, also 24, is meanwhile esconced nicely at

old has the luxury of having the best player in the world to practise with.

Romance aside, Julian Alonso can only improve his game in his role as girlfriend Martina Hingis' sparring partner.

He too deserves his place on the giant Spanish fleet.

Miller's heroics lift Pacers past Bulls

INDIANAPOLIS (AFP) — An inspirational fourth quarter by Reggie Miller despite a painful right ankle sprain has revived the championship hopes of the Indiana Pacers.

Miller scored 13 of his 28 points while limping through the final period and Indiana outlasted reigning champion Chicago 107-105 in the National Basketball Association semi-finals here Saturday.

"I had to be out there. It was do or die for us," Miller said. "Down 4-5, you really could have written us off."

Instead, the Pacers pulled within 2-1 in the best-of-seven Eastern Conference series with game four here Monday and game five Wednesday in Chicago.

"We will be fine. Today was just a bump in the road," Chicago forward Michael Jordan said. "We have been in this situation before and we have always survived."

Miller suffered the injury when he accidentally stepped on Jordan's foot in the third quarter, saying he "felt a twinge and heard a pop." Miller was in pain but vowed to keep playing.

"It hurts. It's tender. It's sore," he said. "Hopefully with a day off I can get some mobility. It's hard to go side to side. I can go up and down but I need to be better for Monday. It's a huge game for us."

Miller's heroics thwarted a furious rally by the Bulls, who trailed 101-93 with 94 seconds remaining. Miller sank his fourth clutch basket in a 2-34 span, his third three-pointer, to produce Indiana's largest lead.

"He hit some big shots, four in a row," Bulls coach Phil Jackson said. "You're not going to hold a guy like that down forever."

Jordan scored six of his game-high 30 points in the final 52 seconds and Scottie Pippen added five more, but Miller, Antonio Davis and Jalen Rose sank free throws in the final seconds to hold off the Bulls.

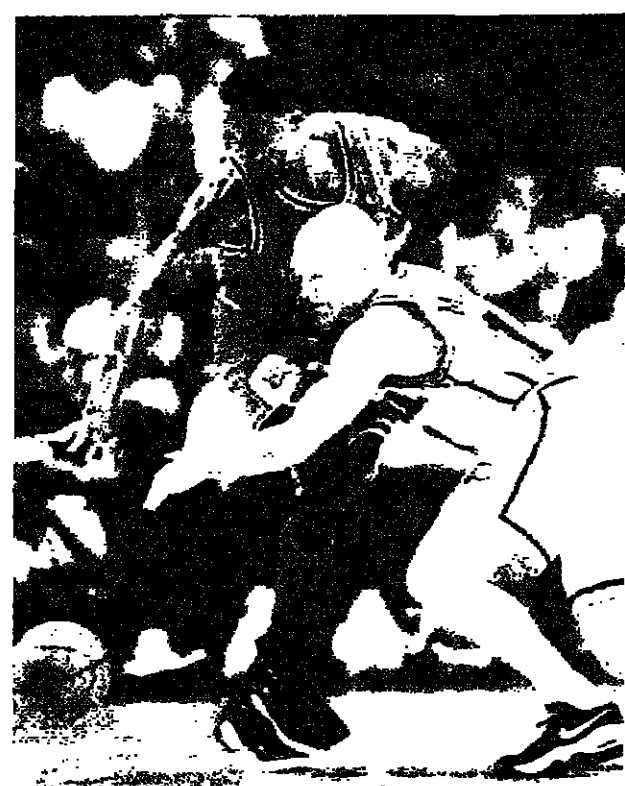
Indiana coach Larry Bird said he had to take a chance and play Miller, who limped down the court after each of his clutch shots.

"He said he could go and I knew he wanted to play," Bird said. "Like all great players when they are hurt, he wanted to be out there. We had to lay everything on the line. He was hobbling a little bit but he made some key shots."

Miller took advantage of Chicago's refusal to attack him and defensive lapses that left him open from three-point range.

"I knew I wasn't going to be able to drive," Miller said. "I was playing off the mistakes Chicago made on me. If I'm out there, they still have to pay attention to me."

"A lot of times I was just a decoy. A couple times I think they forgot about me. When you see a wounded dog you



Chicago Bulls Scottie Pippen (L) knocks the ball away from Indiana Pacers Chris Mullin during second quarter action in their NBA playoff game (Reuters photo)

usually go after it. I was surprised. If I see someone hurt I go at them and keep going at them."

Pippen agreed, saying, "He had some great looks. We should have been more aware of where he was on the court."

Miller's determination gave Indiana a boost when it was most needed.

"Reggie was a major inspiration. He got us over the top," Indiana's Jalen Rose said. "He always does whatever it takes."

The Bulls did not dominate the third quarter as they had in the first two games. Rose sparked an 8-0 run by Pacer reserves to finish the quarter and pull Indiana level at 77-77.

Nor did Chicago force excessive turnovers, creating 13 while making 14. The Pacers were physical, bumping Pippen and Jordan and

not allowing Pippen to guard Indiana's mark Jackson as tightly as in past games.

"They didn't allow us to be aggressive," Pippen said of the referees. "They called me for two quick fouls and took our aggressiveness away from a defensive standpoint. I got banged up pretty good."

Pippen was knocked to the floor three times, suffering a bruised hip and a cut elbow without fouls being called. But the Bulls adjusted.

The Utah Jazz can complete a sweep of the Los Angeles Lakers in the other semi-final. They would own a home-court edge in the finals, even over the Bulls team that beat them in last year's final.

"We're not focused on the Jazz," Jordan said. "We can't get to the Jazz unless we take care of business now."

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANNAN HIRSCH			
USE YOUR TRUMPS WISELY			
Both vulnerable South dealt			
NORTH			
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The bidding			
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Pass Pass Pass Pass			
Opening lead: Queen of 7			
Six clubs by South is an excellent contract, and after any lead other than a heart it could be claimed. The heart lead, however, removes a key entry to declarer's hand before it can be put to good use. How would you cope with this development?			
Once North agreed on clubs as trumps, South could afford to cue-			

Makinen makes it three in a row

BUENOS AIRES (AFP) — Finland's Tommi Makinen chalked up his third consecutive victory in the Rally of Argentina Saturday when he brought his Mitsubishi home nearly half-a-minute clear of the Toyota Corolla of Spaniard Carlos Sainz who took over the lead in the World Championship title race.

Fellow-Finn Juha Kankkunen was third in a Ford Escort while British drivers Richard Burns, in a Mitsubishi, and Colin McRae, in a Subaru, took fourth and fifth places.

The result pushed the unlucky McRae down to second place in the World title race — two points behind Sainz who now totals 28 points.

Mitsubishi also top the manufacturers' standings ahead of Subaru and Toyota, and their team director Andrew Cowan admitted: "This is a good win for Tommi. He was confident before the start and the

events to come are the ones he enjoys."

McRae won 15 of the 23 special stages and would almost certainly have won but for road penalties on the second day when he and co-driver Nicky Grist were forced to stop and repair their car's suspension.

"It's been a great fight as we pushed Richard harder and harder," said McRae, adding: "Obviously there was a chance that we could have forced him into a mistake but he's driven well and we just ran out of time."

"But we have picked up points and that's what is important. The situation in the World Championship has not gone against us too badly and I think we have got a lot to feel confident about as we go to Greece in a couple of weeks."

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Gingrich aide demands exclusion of Erekat from Wednesday's meeting

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Stirring a new round of controversy, an aide to U.S. Speaker Newt Gingrich demanded Sunday that a senior Palestinian official be kept out of meetings with a visiting U.S. congressional delegation.

In making the request of U.S. consulate officials, Mr. Gingrich's staff cited comments made last week by Saeb Erekat, the chief Palestinian peace negotiator.

Mr. Erekat warned that violence could break out, and there would be "body bags" if Mr. Gingrich went ahead with a visit to the proposed site of a U.S. embassy building in Jerusalem.

"I'm not sure how many votes (Gingrich) will win for this, but he may be counting body bags... I'm sure it will have grave repercussions," Mr. Erekat was quoted as saying by The Chicago Tribune on May 21.

The United States and most other nations keep embassies in Tel Aviv pending a final Arab-Israeli settlement, but Mr. Gingrich supports moving the embassy to Jerusalem now.

Mr. Gingrich, subsequently cancelled the visit after consulting with the Clinton administration.

The Gingrich aide, who asked that his name not be used, said Mr. Erekat's remarks advocated violence.

The aide told a U.S. official co-ordinating the visit in the

presence of an Associated Press (AP) reporter that "it would not be appropriate" for Mr. Erekat to be present when the delegation meets

Erekat:

It is not up to him to decide who is in the meeting, and who is not

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat on Wednesday in the West Bank town of Ramallah.

Mr. Erekat, the Palestinian minister of local government, said his warning was designed to prevent violence, not provoke it.

"This was not a threat under any circumstances," Mr. Erekat told AP. "I wish Mr. Gingrich would get the message. We wanted to avoid the steps he was planning to take because we knew it would lead to bloodshed."

Mr. Erekat added that Mr. Gingrich would not be the one to determine who would attend the meeting in Ramallah, where the 20-member U.S. delegation is scheduled to confer with Mr. Arafat and his top aides.

"It is not up to him to decide

who is in the meeting, and who is not," Mr. Erekat said.

Mr. Gingrich announced Saturday that he had cancelled the visit to the embassy site after talking with U.S. National Security Adviser Sandy Berger, saying he did not want to "create an incident."

The future of Jerusalem is one of the most sensitive issues on the Arab-Israeli agenda.

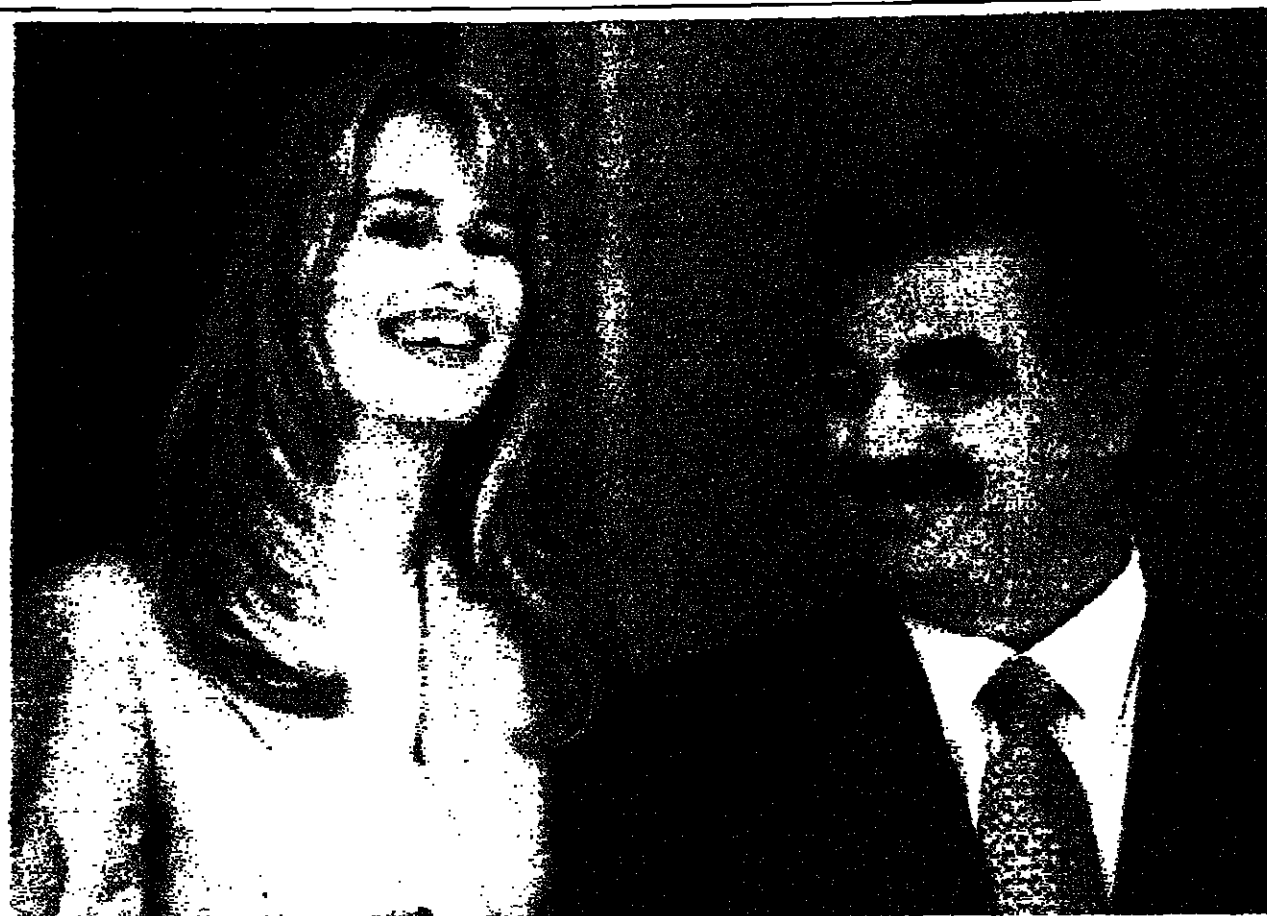
The Palestinians want to establish the capital of a future state in the eastern sector of Jerusalem, which Israel occupied in the 1967 Mideast War and later illegally annexed.

Mr. Erekat also attacked the U.S. members of Congress, who include Minority Leader Dick Gephardt, saying it was a "major provocation" for the legislators to attend Israel's Jerusalem Day festivities.

Mr. Gingrich, speaking to a luncheon hosted by Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert, said his visit was not designed to provoke Palestinians.

"True peace will come when everyone understands that you can be for Jerusalem Day and not be against anyone. You can be for living together without being opposed to anyone," said Mr. Gingrich.

Going into a meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Mr. Gingrich said the bipartisan congressional delegation wanted to "help the peace process."



Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri welcomes Claudia Schiffer at his palace in Beirut Sunday (AP photo)

Schiffer meets Lebanese leaders

BEIRUT (AP) — Claudia Schiffer gave Lebanon's president two kisses, rubbed shoulders with its prime minister and received a traditional Lebanese robe Sunday as a souvenir. All that before the German supermodel took part in what she came for — a fashion show in the Lebanese capital. Ms. Schiffer, whose face is familiar on billboards and magazines in this country, arrived Saturday night. On Sunday morning, as the nation was engaged in its first municipal elections in 35 years, she travelled to the presidential palace in suburban Baabda accompanied by Miss Lebanon Joelle Bohlok. After a souvenir picture with Lebanese President Elias Hrawi and the first family, Ms. Schiffer was presented with a blue abaya, a long traditional Lebanese robe, and a silver tray engraved with a cedar of Lebanon, the national symbol. Mr. Hrawi, 72, was rewarded with kisses on both cheeks. Later, Ms. Schiffer met Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri. Ms. Schiffer is the latest of many international celebrities and performers to visit Lebanon since the end of the 1975-90 civil war as the country tries to restore its pre-war status as the Arab World's entertainment and commercial hub.

'France keen to expand ties with Iran'

TEHRAN (AP) — A top French diplomat on Sunday said his government is keen to expand ties with Iran, and does not believe in isolating that country, the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) said.

France is pleased with the policies of moderate Iranian President Mohammad Khatami, who took office in August. IRNA quoted the French official, Bertrand Dufourcq, as saying.

Mr. Dufourcq, the No. 2 official in the French foreign ministry, arrived here Sunday for a

two-day visit. IRNA did not elaborate on Mr. Dufourcq's comments, which he reportedly made during a meeting with the deputy speaker of Iran's parliament, Hassan Rowhani.

Iran's main opposition in exile has criticized Mr. Dufourcq's visit, saying it will be trumpeted by Iran's ruling Islamic clergy "so they can continue the repression."

Iran received a boost recently when the United States agreed to ease U.S. restrictions on multinational companies doing

business with Iran, including a consortium led by French oil giant Total. Total is partly-owned by the French government.

The consortium had signed a \$2 billion contract with Iran in September for the expansion of a southern gas field, despite a U.S. law, which calls for sanctions against companies that invest more than \$20 million in Iran's energy sector.

France has often condemned American "policy" of isolating Iran and lobbied for the U.S. to scrap the law. The U.S. accus-

es Iran of sponsoring international terrorism and trying to build nuclear weapons.

Iran's relations with the European Union (EU) have been improving over the last couple of months, and earlier this month both sides agreed to resume formal official-level talks.

The EU had broken off regular discussions with Iran last year after a German court accused Iranian leaders of ordering the 1992 assassination of Kurdish dissidents in Berlin.

Egypt executes Islamists behind deadly bus attack

CAIRO (AFP) — Two Islamists who carried out one of the deadliest attacks on tourists in Egypt by firebombing a bus in front of Cairo's Muslim Egyptian Museum in September, killing 10 people, were hanged at dawn Sunday.

Saber Abu Ela, 32, a failed singer, and his brother Mahmoud, 24, were executed at a prison in the capital for murdering nine German tourists and their Egyptian driver when they attacked a tour bus parked in front of the museum with petrol bombs and gunfire on Sept. 18.

Mr. Saber, previously judged mentally ill for killing four tourists at a Cairo hotel in 1993, was hanged first, a judicial source said.

Shortly before their execution, the men once again admitted responsibility for firebombing the bus, saying they wanted to "get rid of foreigners coming to Egypt."

The two Islamists, found guilty in October, said at their two-week trial that they had been influenced by the ideas of Jihad, the Islamist group which assassinated Egyptian President Anwar Sadat in

1981, but had acted independently.

Mr. Saber had been previously convicted of killing a French national, an Italian and two Americans at Cairo's Semiramis hotel in October 1993, but he was deemed mentally ill and confined to a psychiatric hospital from which he later escaped.

At the start of the trial over the Cairo bus attack however, an official medical report said Mr. Saber was responsible for his actions and was not "mentally deranged."

The former director of the psychiatric hospital, Nessim Abdul Malak, who was accused of aiding Mr. Saber's escape, was condemned to life imprisonment and hard labour on Nov. 13 for "taking bribes and failing in his duties."

Eight nurses at the hospital were also sentenced to prison terms from three to 10 years with forced labour over Mr. Saber's escape.

The September attack at the Cairo museum, which houses some of Egypt's richest treasures, was the first against tourists after a period of calm.

The Islamist attack was followed just two months later by

the bloody massacre at the southern resort town of Luxor, where they gunned down 58 holiday makers and four Egyptians on Nov. 17.

In April 1996, 18 Greek tourists were killed in an attack by Islamist gunmen on their tour bus in front of a hotel near the Giza pyramids.

Egypt imposes the death penalty for murder, rape, terrorism and drug trafficking.

The execution of the brothers leaves 120 prisoners awaiting execution on Egypt's death row for various offences, according to press reports. More than 100 people have been sentenced to death by Egyptian military and high state security courts since 1992 and around 70 have been executed.

The previous execution took place earlier this month, when five people were hanged on May 4 for separate crimes including rape and murder. More than 1,300 people have died in Islamist attacks in Egypt since 1992, when Islamists, mainly the outlawed Jamaa Islamiyya, launched a violent campaign to overthrow the government and establish an Islamist state in Egypt.

U.N. plans to tighten inspections for Iraq's oil-for-food deal

BAGHDAD (AP) — The United Nations plans to bolster its inspections and monitoring of the oil-for-food deal when the programme expands under its next phase, U.N. officials said Sunday.

"A new and enhanced phase is about to start, and the United Nations is looking at strengthening the observation mechanism," said Eric Falt, the U.N. spokesman in Iraq.

Among the plans are to make inspection teams bigger, increase the number of visits, improve training and set up observation centres outside the Iraqi capital, U.N. officials said.

Under the new program, scheduled to start Jan. 4, Iraq will import as much as \$3 billion over six months. So far, its imports under the U.N. deal have been about \$1.3 billion. Since December 1996, when

the United Nations granted exemptions from the sanctions, Iraq has exported \$2 billion in oil every six months to pay for imports, war reparations and U.N. operations in Iraq. Under the next phase, it can export up to \$5.2 billion.

The sanctions were imposed after Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, causing widespread shortages in the once-wealthy country.

Birdal attackers say they were trained at base of Turkish ultranationalist group

ANKARA (AP) — Two gunmen who attacked a leading human rights activist said they were trained at the secret base of a shadowy ultranationalist group, newspaper reports said Sunday.

The two were arrested Friday along with four accomplices, including an army sergeant, for the May 12 shooting of Alkin Birdal, the head of the indepen-

dent Human Rights Association. Mr. Birdal formally identified the two from his hospital bed Sunday.

In statements leaked to the press, the gunmen said they were recruited by the army sergeant, the right-hand man of an ultranationalist hitman known as "Green," Hurriyet newspaper said. They said they received guerrilla training from

an unnamed ultranationalist group four months ago at a secret camp 70 km west of Istanbul, the paper added. The confessions were likely revive the outcry over a scandal surrounding state death squads.

The government admitted earlier this year that it had used ultranationalist hitmen like "Green" against people seen as security threats.

Fighter jet sale to UAE could lead to cut in U.S. forces in Gulf — envoy

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The sale of U.S.-built F-16 fighter jets to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) could lead to U.S. forces in the Gulf being scaled down, the U.S. ambassador to Abu Dhabi said.

David Litt, quoted by UAE newspapers on Sunday, also denied that the sale of 80 F-16s would trigger an arms race in the oil-rich region.

"I think it will help promote stability and security in the region and enhance the security of the UAE," which has a territorial dispute with Iran, its neighbour across the Gulf, Mr. Litt told reporters.

"As a result, we will reduce rather than augment our forces in the region to only the minimum required levels," the ambassador said.

The UAE air force commander, Khaled Ben Abdullah Al Mazrui, said Friday that the order placed with manufacturers Lockheed Martin of the United States for the F-16s would cost around \$6 billion.

He said the first batch of planes would arrive in 2000, but the ambassador said delivery would start in three or four years.

The deal, which was announced on May 12 in Washington, also includes AMRAAM air-to-air missiles and HARM anti-radar missiles, according to a U.S. defence department spokesman.

Iran, whose foreign minister, Kamal Kharazi, arrived Saturday for a visit to Abu Dhabi focused on a dispute over three islands in the southern Gulf, has warned that the deal could threaten regional peace and stability.

New Indonesian president hints at 'really democratic elections'

JAKARTA (AFP) — Indonesia's new president B.J. Habibie has hinted he might be ready to hold new elections, a leading Muslim politician Sunday quoted the president as saying.

There was no immediate confirmation from the presidential palace.

"He (Habibie) told me it would take at least six months to carry out reforms, including laws related to really democratic elections and to establish a very stable executive council," Amien Rais said on television.

"If really pushed they

[the election laws] could be ready in six months," Mr. Rais, head of the 28-million strong Muhammadiyah Islamic movement, quoted Mr. Habibie as telling him at a meeting on Saturday night.

Mr. Rais also said he thought the president understood "the aspirations of the people" and that he appeared willing to carry out reforms.

The Indonesian media, parliament and social groups should play a "watchdog" role in ensuring the reforms are carried out, said Mr. Rais who has been among the many

politicians urging Mr. Habibie to serve only as a transitional president.

When former Indonesian President Suharto stunned the nation by stepping down and appointing Mr. Habibie, then his vice president, to replace him Thursday, he said the new president should serve out the rest of his five-year term, until 2003.

Mr. Rais said the Habibie government had to concentrate on regaining public confidence, containing inflation, stabilising the rupiah and releasing political detainees.

Dubai rolls out red carpet for first Planet Hollywood in Arab World

DUBAI (AFP) — Movie star Bruce Willis is set to ring in Planet Hollywood's debut in the Arab World with a rock-and-roll gig here on Tuesday, as the battle of the restaurants heats up in buzzing Dubai.

The battle in this Arabian desert emirate pits the celebrity restaurant chain against the Hard Rock Cafe and the Fashion Cafe.

Dubai is rolling out a 200-metre red carpet for Mr. Willis, fellow Planet Hollywood International shareholder Sylvester Stallone, supermodel Cindy Crawford and film stars Patrick Swayze, Wesley Snipes and Tia Carrera.

Fresh from the Cannes film festival, Mr. Willis will be lead singer of a 13-member band called the Accelerators for a grand opening night in this commercial hub in the Gulf.

It is the first Planet Hollywood restaurant in the Arab Middle East, two years after its regional launch in Israel.

In an imitation of Oscars night, the movie stars along with a Bollywood counter-

part, Amitabh Bachchan, will walk the red carpet to take the accolade from the crowd as the ceremony is filmed on satellite TV.

But unlike in Los Angeles, camels and Arabian stallions will add the exotic touch outside the giant blue globe-shaped restaurant which seats 360 diners, organisers said.

The restaurant itself, split up into several themed rooms, is filled with memorabilia from blockbuster films such as Titanic and Men in Black as well as from Lawrence of Arabia.

The Titanic memorabilia includes cutlery, a life jacket and a blanket.

Only a hand-picked audience of 500 including Emirati sheikhs have been invited for a bash inside, but some of the life-sized cut-outs of movie stars that feature in the decor will come to life for the crowds outside.

Mr. Willis and his band will perform on an outdoor stage, where the other stars are also due to make appearances.

More than 80 Planet Hollywood outlets, many of them merchandise shops

rather than restaurants, have been opened around the world since the initial launch in New York in October 1991.

But it has stiff competition in Dubai.

Its rival Hard Rock Cafe opened earlier this year and Dubai is on the verge of having its own Fashion Cafe, owned by a bevy of supermodels including Claudia Schiffer, who is to visit the Emirates on Monday for a polo event.

Planet Hollywood restaurants are also coming to Beirut and Kuwait.

Saudi billionaire Prince Walid Ben Abdul Aziz bought shares in Planet Hollywood International last April and plans to help launch 34 new outlets across the Middle East and Europe.

But with the novelty value perhaps wearing a little thin, Planet Hollywood shares on the New York Stock Exchange have fallen from more than \$13 at the start of 1998 to a current market value of below \$9.

Michael Jackson to build theme park in Rio

RIO DE JANEIRO (AFP) — Pop icon Michael Jackson has plans to build an amusement park in the Brazilian city whose main attractions are beaches and carnival celebrations, local officials said.

"I would like to create in Rio a theme park, which will be a major international success and will attract to Brazil millions of tourists from around the world," Jackson said in a letter to Rio state Governor Marcello Alencar.

In the letter, the singer added that he was "ready to come to Rio, of Janeiro very soon to meet with you and to sign a preliminary letter of intent." He added that he had a special love for Rio and for the people of Brazil.

Bruce Lee museum to open in Hong Kong

HONG KONG (AFP) — A museum devoted to legendary Kung Fu film star Bruce Lee is to open in Hong Kong. It was reported Sunday. The museum with more than 10,000 items of memorabilia is expected to open in July.

Ng said Lee was "a great figure in Chinese history" as the first Chinese actor who caught international attention, and helped Chinese movies break into the world market.

Ng said Lee was "a great figure in Chinese history" as the first Chinese actor who caught international attention, and helped Chinese movies break into the world market.

Martin Scorsese decorated with France's Legion of Honour

CANNES (AP) — France decorated director Martin Scorsese with the Chevalier of the Legion of Honour at the Cannes Film Festival. Scorsese, president of the festival jury this year, "is among those who is capable of making us dream," Culture Minister Catherine Trautmann said before pinning the medal to his lapel.

Scorsese also noted the American director's help "in safeguarding masterpieces of the past" by aiding in their restoration. "I must say I'm greatly honoured to receive this decoration," Scorsese told the audience under a huge seaside tent. "It means a great deal to me; I've always in a way dreamed of it."

"I really owe a great debt to French cinema," particularly French cinema, said the director.

Tommy Lee sentenced for assaulting ex-wife

MALIBU (AFP) — Tommy Lee, estranged husband of actress Pamela Anderson, was sentenced to six months in jail for assaulting his ex-wife and former "Baywatch" bombshell.

Lee, 35, a drummer with the rock group Motley Crue, was arrested Feb. 24 after Anderson called the police alleging he had physically abused her. On Jan. 12, Lee was ordered to undergo anger management counselling and perform 200 hours of community service as part of his sentence for battery stemming from a 1996 altercation with a photographer.

Lee married Anderson in Cancun, Mexico, in 1995. From 1986 to 1994 he was married to another starlet of U.S. television, Heather Locklear, known for her role in the series Melrose Place.

Israel arrests five from Hamas fund-raising

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Israel arrested five men Sunday and a deputy mayor of Jerusalem and a deputy mayor of Tel Aviv for raising funds for the Hamas militant group. The five men are accused of raising money for the group's activities in the West Bank and Gaza. The men were arrested in a raid on a fund-raising event in Tel Aviv. The deputy mayors were also arrested. The men are being held in a military prison. The deputy mayors are being held in a military prison. The men are being held in a military prison.

King, Queen to celebrate 50th anniversary

MAN (AFP) — Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor yesterday celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in Jordan. The couple celebrated the occasion in a private ceremony at the Royal Palace. The King and Queen were joined by their children and grandchildren. The celebration was a joyous occasion for the Jordanian people.

Prince A suspect in Rabia slaying

MAN (AFP) — Five Jordanians accused of killing 11 people in January and April arrested. A sixth was arrested during a shoot-out with police forces, and a seventh is still on the run. The suspects are being held in a military prison. The suspects are being held in a military prison. The suspects are being held in a military prison.

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